



Super/H2

KC Concepcion's Paris diary/pictorial: From white to warmth

Metro/A23

Japanese tenant reportedly employs 27 cop escorts

Plan/C3

Margarita Fores is a foodie, doting mom and lover of retro



News/A2

Gov't, MILF resume peace talks April 16 in Kuala Lumpur

Sat Special/A4-1

At 80, Paul Newman to make last movie before retiring



Marquez gives Morales tips on how to beat Pacquiao

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS—Erik Morales will not back down because Mexicans don't step back during a fight.

"Nunca (never)," Morales swore during the fight press conference where he also praised Manny Pacquiao as a good, strong fighter.

MARQUEZ/A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Solons in exodus to Vegas in aid of boxing match

By Michael Lim Ubac and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

GUESS who's going to Vegas?

Besides rich Filipino boxing aficionados, more than a dozen congress-



SOLONS/A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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Holy Week plot real-PNP

PNP bares sketches, names of 'bombers'

By Luige A. del Puerto and Leila B. Salaverria

THE THREAT of bombings is real, top police officials declared in a hastily called press conference yesterday.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan, head of the Philippine National Police's Intelligence Group, said Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Solaiman "reiterated" his call to his followers to immediately bomb key cities, particularly in Metro Manila, after the killing of three of the group's top leaders at Camp Bagong Diwa on Tuesday.

"They're trained. They're determined. They're willing to kill and be killed," PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao said.

As though taking a cue from the warning on Thursday of State Prosecutor Peter Medalle, the PNP chief warned of attacks by seven Abu Sayyaf members during the Holy Week.

"What is important here is we give to you the sketches of these people, if only to inform the public... that the threat is serious and we are not taking it lightly," Lomibao said, adding:

"[We made this disclosure] so that when anything happens, they won't say [there was] an intelligence failure."

Lomibao named the supposed bombers as Hilarion del Rosario Santos Jr. alias Ahmed Santos, alleged leader of the Rajah Solaiman Revolutionary Movement; Amilhamsa Ajijul alias Alex Alvarez, a

HOLY/A22



HOMES FOR HOMELESS BADJAOS

President Arroyo inaugurates a housing project in Barangay Kulay Bato in Lamitan, Basilan, as part of the government's shelter-for-all program.

Jailbreak probers focusing on collusion

By Luige A. del Puerto and Armand Nocum

THE ESCAPE attempt by the Abu Sayyaf detainees at the Metro Manila District Jail in Taguig was a well-planned operation that may have been greatly aided by the laxity of the jail guards inside

the maximum-security facility.

Ghalib Andang (Commander Robot), one of the Abu Sayyaf leaders killed in the police assault that ended the crisis, may have provided the money used to allegedly buy the friendship of prison guards and facilitate the use of mobile phones by ASG sus-

pects to plot their escape.

Nestor Lazaro, a justice department prosecutor, said at least three sources close to the Abu Sayyaf suspects told them that from P20,000 to P50,000 was being delivered to Andang every month prior to the failed jailbreak.

Senior Supt. Federico Laciste Jr., the head of the team probing the attempted jailbreak on Monday and the bloody police assault that ended the siege the next day, said he could already see there were some lapses on the part of the jail guards.

JAILBREAK/A6

GMA calls special session to tackle VAT

By Christine Avendaño, Michael Lim Ubac and TJ Burgonio

WITH THE Senate failing to pass the value-added tax bill yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo has called for a three-day special session of Congress immediately after Holy Week.

The President issued a proclamation order last night calling Congress to a special session from March 30 to April 1 in order to pass the bill restructuring the VAT system.

The Senate adjourned yesterday without passing the VAT bill, apparently because of Senators Sergio Osmeña's and Jamby Madrigal's insistence to continue interpellations on the measure after the Lenten break.

"We will not be able to pass the bill today," said Senate President Franklin Drilon, but added that he was open to the holding of a special session.

"That's the President's prerogative. Under the Constitution, she can call a special session and we just have to work. We will work and come back before April 11 if she calls a special session," he said.

Invoking her powers under Section 15, Article VI of the Constitution in calling for the special session, the President underscored the need to pass the VAT bill, saying it was "aimed at accelerating the recovery of the country's fiscal condition, achieving domestic stability and improving investor confidence

GMA/A6

Moro solon hits PNP, DOJ for fueling hate

By Philip C. Tubeza and Luige A. del Puerto

ANAK Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman yesterday urged authorities not to make provocative statements that would serve to heighten tensions between Muslims and Christians.

Noting that yesterday was the 37th anniversary of the Jabidah massacre, Hataman criticized in particular Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual for his statement that the 22 prisoners killed in the police assault on a building in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig all went to hell.

"He should not have said that since only God can say who went to hell or heaven," said the Muslim party-list representative. "This only makes the situation worse. Let us not make statements that would only exacerbate misconceptions between Christians and Muslims."

Hataman said not all Muslims believed that the 22 suspected Abu Sayyaf members killed in the assault were martyrs.

He said there was no consensus to that effect in the Muslim community, and pointed out that it was the dead men's families who insisted that their bodies not be washed before burial and that they be considered shahid (Muslim martyrs).

"The others who were at the funeral were there because they wanted to mourn with the dead men's relatives," Hataman said.

He said this did not mean that the mourn-

MORO/A22



DIALOGUE with Muslim brothers. PNP chief, Director General Arturo Lomibao (2nd from left) and NCRPO Chief Avelino Razon (extreme left) hold a consultation meeting with the Metro Manila Muslim Peace and Order Coordinating Council on Friday. Razon had been holding meetings with Muslim leaders regularly even before the violent incident in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig.

ERIK ARAZAS

No way Malacañang supporting divorce bill

By Christine O. Avendaño and Christian V. Esguerra

NO WAY.

This early, the Arroyo administration has put its foot down on the prospect of legalizing divorce in the country where

the predominant faith is Roman Catholic. Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye yesterday said Malacañang was not inclined to support the bill filed by party-list Rep. Liza Maza in the House of Representatives that seeks to legalize the dissolution of marriage.

"I think this is not in line with the current thinking of the Palace," Bunye told reporters in Malacañang, in reaction to Maza's divorce bill.

The press secretary acknowledged that the divorce bill has its pros and cons. But he stressed that the Palace's stand had al-

ways been "pro-life" and "pro-family," and that was why he did not think the divorce bill would get Malacañang's nod.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is known to be a devout Catholic.

Maza, a member of the militant

NO WAY/A21

US to deport Lacson aide, says NBI exec

THE FUGITIVE ex-police officer accused of involvement in the Dacer-Corbito murders and recently arrested in New York City may soon be deported to the Philippines.

"Michael Ray Aquino is now being processed for deportation," National Bureau of Investigation Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz said yesterday, quoting Kevin Peters, head of the US Department of Homeland Security in Manila.

Aquino was arrested on March 7 while trying to obtain a work permit at No. 26 Federal Plaza in New York, Diaz said.

"He is presently detained at a federal facility in New York for violating [US] immigration laws and is not eligible for bail," Diaz said.

Diaz clarified that the former police superintendent was arrested by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and not by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"We received the information regarding Aquino on Tuesday from the FBI and [there

US TO DEPORT/A21

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience cloudy skies with scattered rain showers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/19/02

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Halo/Halo	Partly Cloudy
Bogus	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laos	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Expect more oil price hikes, say oil players

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S oil players warned the public yesterday to brace for larger and more frequent increases in the pump prices of petroleum products, claiming they have yet to recover more than P10 per liter in costs despite the series of oil price increases this month alone.

Caltex Philippines Inc. and Pilipinas Shell Inc. yesterday raised gasoline prices by 50 centavos per liter. A day before, smaller oil players jacked up pump prices by the same amount.

Caltex said it had to increase gasoline prices due to the continued rise in the prices of crude and refined products in the world market.

"We will continue to maintain the discounts for public utility vehicles in selected Caltex stations nationwide," said Art Bernales, spokesperson for Caltex. Oil firms provide a discount of as much as P1 per liter to PUVs.

The increase was the third for the month and fifth for the year totaling about P2 per liter for gasoline and nearly P4 per liter for mass-based fuels like diesel and kerosene.

Oil firms said there would likely be another price hike before the end of March as crude oil prices scaled fresh highs on Thursday, prompting the Orga-

nization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to consider another increase in oil production to rein in world oil prices.

"Since Dubai crude oil was traded in 1983 never has the price shot up to \$47 per barrel. We need to recover a total of about P10.35 per liter. But we are sensitive enough not to implement that on one blow. We will cushion the impact of the rising oil prices for as long as we can by implementing the price adjustment on a staggered basis," said Glenn Yu, vice president of the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association.

Yu said a twice-weekly hikes in pump prices was being considered to help the players recoup their costs.

The price of Dubai crude had gone up to an average of \$44.93 per barrel this month against \$39.81 in February and \$37.92 in January. For the year, the price of crude had averaged at \$40.89 per barrel against \$33.63 per barrel for the whole of 2004.

Yu said a larger oil price hike is inevitable as diesel price in Mean of Platts Singapore or MOPS, a benchmark for importers, rose by \$18 per barrel this month or equivalent to P6.40 per liter.

He said gasoline price in MOPS rose by \$7 per barrel or equivalent to P2.45 per liter.

Gov't, MILF peace talks start on April 16 in KL

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE DATE for the start of formal peace talks between the Philippine government and Moro separatists had been set, ending months of speculation over whether the talks would start at all following periodic clashes between the guerrillas and government soldiers.

Silvestre Afable, chief government negotiator, said teams from the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) would begin the talks in Kuala Lumpur on April 16.

"President Arroyo is backing the peace talks with full political will and everybody on board wants to respond with strong momentum," Afable said in a press statement.

He said Al Haj Murad, MILF chair, confirmed to him the date of the start of the talks in a four-hour meeting in Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao.

Afable quoted Murad as saying the MILF negotiating team "has been organized and is ready to be fielded for the talks."

The government panel, he said, was also ready to face the thorniest issues in the talks, including that on ancestral domain.

The country's Muslim minority says its members were dispo-

sessed of their land after Spain, and later the United States, the former colonial powers, introduced the western concept of titling property.

Afable said Dato Othman Bin Abd. Razak, director general of the Prime Minister's office of Malaysia, facilitated and attended the meeting with Murad.

Afable quoted Dato Othman as reiterating Malaysia's "unremitting commitment" to host the talks, lead an International Monitoring Team (IMT) and accept MILF nominees for post-peace talks programs in Malaysia.

He said the government and MILF were grateful for Malaysia's involvement in the "full menu of the peace process, together with Brunei and Libya in the IMT."

Afable said the government and MILF acknowledged the success of an existing truce and the separatists' efforts to help fight lawlessness in Mindanao.

Afable said both sides agreed

with the Malaysian government "that abundant goodwill has been invested in the ceasefire."

Both sides have been observing a ceasefire for the past 20 months, monitored by a 60-member Malaysian-led international contingent, but the only negotiations during that period have been informal meetings.

"The MILF chair is committed to a sincere partnership with the government to work for a final solution to the conflict and I have utmost confidence that the MILF Central Committee and the MILF peace panel will bring this goal to its logical conclusion," Afable said.

He said he and Murad also discussed a range of items in the peace process, including a larger role for the Bangsamoro Development Agency and the need to involve more ordinary people in the negotiations.

Last week, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the MILF had abided by the agreement signed with the government in December last year to help fight terrorism and criminality. Ermita cited as proof of the MILF commitment the rebel group's help in the arrest of kidnapping suspects in rebel area.

In Zamboanga City, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued a statement Wednesday expressing her desire for lasting peace and development in Mindanao to win the war against poverty on the island.

"We want complete and lasting peace to enable our people to gain jobs and fight grinding poverty," Ms Arroyo said. "We want peace to allow our people more space to develop their human potentials and values. We want peace that upholds the law and respects the rights and traditions of our diverse ethnic communities."

The President also vowed to pursue the rehabilitation of areas in Muslim Mindanao that had suffered as a result of clashes between government forces and a combined force of the Abu Sayyaf and followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari, chair of another rebel faction, the Moro National Liberation Front.

"That's why in Mindanao today, especially in Sulu, we are dealing with terror with an iron hand...and sever its links with rebels and insurgents with whom we are waging peace across the negotiating table," the President said. With reports from Inquirer wires

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Malacañang hits US for 'dirty money' tag

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Philip C. Tubeza



BUNYE

WHAT is the US government up to?

Malacañang yesterday twitted the US State Department for its report tagging the Philippines as a major money laundering point.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the US State Department's move was in direct conflict to the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force's decision to drop the Philippines from its list of countries which are notorious for laundering funds coming from criminal activities, specifically drugs.

Last February, the FATF the international anti-money laundering watchdog that includes the US, removed the Philippines from its watchlist after the country complied with the watchdog's requirements such as tougher legislation and stricter enforcement of anti-money laundering measures.

Bunye said that the US Department also "contradicted" the US Ambassador's assessment on the Philippines. "The US (State Department) is saying that we have to go back to the dirty laundry list because of terrorist threat but the US Ambassador claimed that they are reducing their aid to the country because terrorist threat is going down," Bunye said in a briefing in Malacañang.

"Clearly the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing," Bunye said.

The US State Department retained the Philippines on its list of "primary concern countries," partly because insurgency groups in the country were reportedly being bankrolled by money from the illegal trafficking of drugs and ammunition.

The US State Department also cited the growth of the illegal drug trade in the Philippines to a \$1 billion a year industry with

deepening links to organized crime groups in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

In Congress, the US State Department's action drew angry reactions from legislators.

Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco, chair of the House committee on foreign affairs, and Davao Rep. Vincent Garcia, a member of the House committee on economic affairs, said the US report was baseless because even the FATF on Money Laundering removed the Philippines from its watchlist two months ago.

"It's time to take a hard look at the US' motives for unfairly tagging the country as a major money launderer. This is totally uncalled for; it is not supported by facts," Cuenco said.

The two lawmakers said the Philippines' efforts to curb money laundering had borne fruit with the "positive decision" of the FATF. They said the US State Department should have considered the task force's decision before making its report.

They also said the cited problems of drugs and insurgency were insufficient basis for the tag, and pointed out that the report had also ignored the Philippines' progress in tackling these problems.

China's Jintao due in Manila

CHINESE President Hu Jintao is to visit the Philippines from April 26 to 28, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Friday.

"Our relationship with China is one of our most valued ties. It is a relationship shaped by centuries of interaction between the Filipinos and Chinese peoples," Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said, without specifying the agenda of Hu's visit.

Among the six rival claimants

to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, the Philippines and China have improved ties in recent months amid rising bilateral trade.

They agreed with fellow claimant Vietnam earlier this month to conduct a joint survey of the oil potential in disputed areas of the South China Sea.

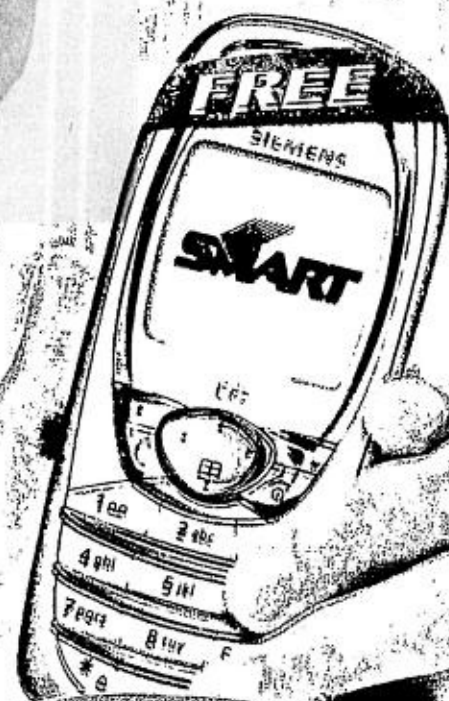
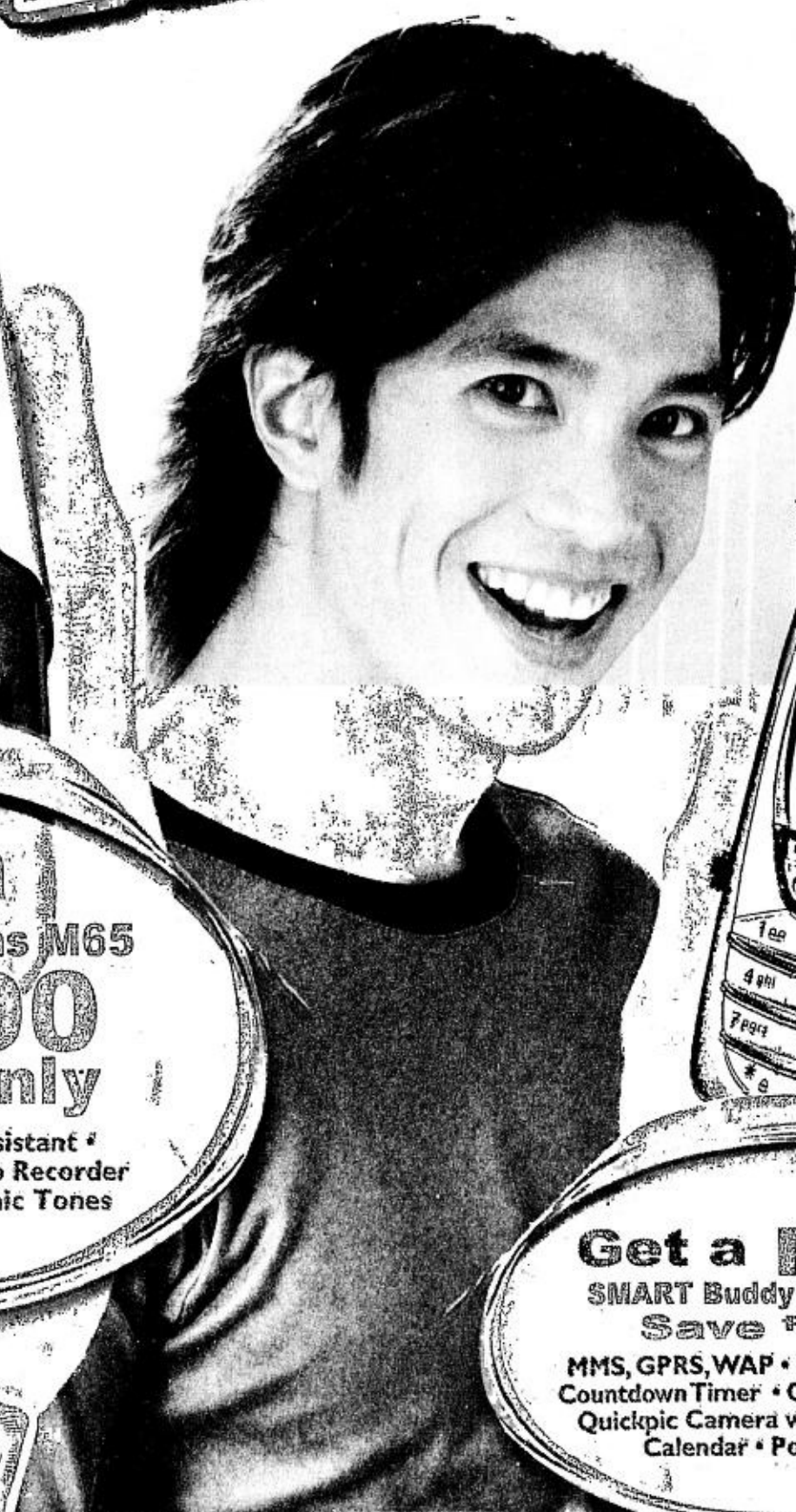
Manila and Beijing also agreed last year to hold annual security talks.

AFP

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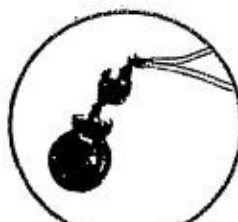
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Solons in exodus to Las Vegas in aid of Pacquiao's boxing

From page A1

men are flying to the United States to watch the World Boxing Council super featherweight championship fight between Manny Pacquiao and Erik Morales Saturday night (Sunday morning, Philippine time).

The exact number of lawmakers could not be ascertained because both the committees on games and amusement and youth and sports have been silent on the reported exodus to America.

Even Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was evasive when asked if indeed a large contingent of 30 congressmen (some of whom were reportedly with the group of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo) would be spending this weekend in Las Vegas, Nevada at ringside in the Pacquiao-Morales match.

"They belong to another branch of the government and that is not the jurisdiction of the executive. Any action has to be dealt with by the House of

Representatives," Bunye said yesterday during a briefing in Malacañang.

The INQUIRER confirmed that among the members of the congressional delegation who are already in the US are Representatives Rodolfo Albano (Kamp, Isabela), Rodolfo Plaza (NPC, Agusan del Sur), Luis Bersamin (Kamp, Abra), Luis Asistio (NPC, Caloocan) and Eric Singson (LP, Ilocos Sur) and Ignacio Arroyo (Kamp, Negros Occidental).

Arroyo and his brother, the First Gentleman, flew to the US yesterday.

No, says Mikey

Rep. Mikey Arroyo (Lakas, Pangasinana) had refused to join the trip.

"I heard about it, but I don't know [who are going]. I'm not part of the contingent," said the President's son who hoped his colleagues did not dip into the scarce government resources to pay their way.

"If you're going to support Manny, that's good but not at the expense of the government and its austerity programs," said the young Arroyo.

He also questioned the timing of the trip due to the non-passage of the value-added tax bills, which are still pending in the Senate.

"Although I'd like to support my friend Manny, the special session is important," the young Arroyo said. Several other congressmen, who could not be identified as of press time, will try to catch a flight today.

Mayo Almarino, chair of committee on games and amusement, might miss the trip if he cannot get an earlier flight. His ticket is confirmed for March 21.

But a staff member said Almarino's trip was a "personal" one as he would be accompanied by his family.

No authority

A congressman is given a \$150 travel allowance per day and an all-expense-paid trip (transportation

and accommodation) if he or she is on an official trip.

But Rep. Ace Barbers, chair of the accounts committee, did not sign any travel authority concerning the Las Vegas match.

"Negative. Congressmen are going to watch the fight, but [using] their personal funds. The trip was not sanctioned by the House," said Barbers who added that only he and De Venecia could sign a travel order to authorize the release of House funds.

He said Almarino had been issued a travel authority, but it had nothing to do with the championship match.

He said congressmen could not even avail themselves of the travel allowance because the travel authority "must be signed and submitted to the committee on inter-parliamentary relations and diplomacy prior to the trip."

But he was quiet on whether congressmen could badger the Speaker to sanction the trip upon their return.

Official meeting

Reached on his mobile phone, Plaza, who is already in Las Vegas, said his trip was official because he's "going to Texas to meet with the Filipino community on March 24."

"This is an official trip. Congress paid for my plane ticket, [and] also gave me a \$1,500 allowance," he said.

He said Pacquiao was the pride of the country. "We have to support him. I don't think we are remiss in our duties in Congress."

He said Speaker Jose de Venecia was mulling over a special session starting Mon-

day so that the bicameral conference committee could refine the measures prior to the adoption by the two chambers, voting separately. (See story on Page A1.)

Finish him off fast

Malacañang is hoping that Pacquiao finish his Mexican opponent quickly, but not because it wants the Vegas-bound congressmen back in Manila early to attend a special session on crucial tax measures.

"We hope this will be finished early. There is speculation that if it is not decisive, it could be risky [for Pacquiao] because of the judges," said Bunye in a briefing in Malacañang yesterday.

Best wishes

"But I believe Manny Pacquiao will win decisively," he said.

Like most Filipinos, the press secretary has not forgotten Pacquiao's monumental clash with Juan Manuel Marquez last May which ended in a draw.

"We'd like to have a decisive victory for our countrymen," Bunye said. "We would like to send our best wishes to our champion that he might continue to win and bring honor to the country."

Las Vegas odds makers favor Pacquiao over his Mexican foe Morales.

Asked if he was worried that congressmen would extend their stay in Las Vegas to either celebrate Pacquiao's win or ease the pain of his loss, Bunye said: "That's for them to take up with the House Speaker [De Venecia]."

With a report from Nikko Dizon.



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Marquez gives Morales tips how to beat Pacquiao

From page A1

The two great gladiators meet in a 12-round super featherweight bout on Saturday (Sunday in Manila) at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

OK, no retreat, no turning back.

It could not, however, be determined if Morales, a fabled Aztec warrior, would reconsider after hearing these winning tips.

There's only one way Morales can survive Pacquiao.

He should avoid the GenSan gunship.

How to do that? Morales must not allow himself to be locked in a slugout.

This is no quick pointer prescribed by a medicine man.

This comes from Juan Manuel Marquez, he with the doctorate in counter-punching.

Marquez definitely knows whereof he speaks.

Not KO victim

Marquez is not among Pacquiao's 37 knockout victims.

He's one of the few who have survived Pacquiao's feared brick-hard left.

Marquez is fully informed of the exact tonnage behind those punches.

He had to get up three times last May to squeeze through via a controversial draw.

Marquez got hit three times, fell three times in just the first round.

He knows and he's now telling Morales never to underestimate Pacquiao's punching power.

He (Pacquiao) can punch, Marquez attested.

Doubly dangerous

"To be honest, I think he'll even be stronger at 130 than he was at 126," said Marquez.

That should make Pacquiao doubly dangerous.

Marquez warned that Morales can't let Pacquiao get him out of his rhythm.

"Be prepared to keep him head-on and keep him off you," stressed Marquez, the IBF and WBA featherweight champion.

OK, Morales is a notorious slow starter.

So Marquez asked him to "better come out of the locker room warmed up and ready to fight."

Marquez admitted he made stupid mistakes against Pacquiao—and paid for it.

"I think he will come at Erik the same way he came at me."

Anyway, Marquez will not be around here on Saturday.

He will be home in Mexico City where he's currently training for his May 7 fight probably against Victor Puno.

Morales (47-2) has never been knocked out.

He has never been in serious trouble inside the ring.

But Marquez warned a knockout could happen.

That's if Morales assumes he can physically overwhelm Pacquiao (39-2-2).

Great tips to Morales from a great fighting brother.

But hold it.

Final advice

This final advice, Morales may have to seriously evaluate:

"All Pacquiao has is a left hand. If Erik can figure that out, he should be OK."

That's a dangerous proposition.

Reason: Pacquiao has trained long and hard to develop a right punch.

In fact, his trainer, Freddie Roach, bared that their secret weapon could be packed in the right hand.

Asked about the well-hyped Manila Ice, Roach replied:

"It's a right hook, Manila Ice is a right hook, we will knock Morales with it."

Will Erik end up buying a losing tip?

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For DTR-NCR Permit No. A1-248 Series of 2005

Officials violating laws on environment face suits

ENVIRONMENTALISTS have decided to shift their battle from the streets to the courts.

The Kalikasan ay Sagipin (Kalasag) coalition would start initiating citizens' suits against national and local government officials who violate or obstruct the implementation of environmental laws in the country.

Greenpeace campaigns director for Southeast Asia Von Hernandez said legal cases were a course of action that has not yet been widely employed by environment groups or individuals who are aware of violations of environmental laws.

"It is a tool that's available to us, and we now intend to use it," Hernandez said.

"Much of the environment

problem is political, so we are also looking for political solutions," he said.

He cited RA 9003 or the Ecological Waste Management Act, which has been in effect for the past four years, but which have not been implemented by most local governments.

Only about five percent of the country's 42,000 barangays segregate their waste and have put up a Materials Recovery Facility for the recyclable trash.

Hernandez said that while it would be impossible to sue all the non-complying barangays, the coalition could focus on certain local governments with blatant violations.

Blanche S. Rivera

Rehab of RP's forests to take 3,870 years

By Blanche S. Rivera

NOT IN our lifetime.

With only a meager budget for reforestation, it will take 3,870 years to fully rehabilitate the country's 5.4 million hectares of denuded forests, reforestation czar Victor Corpus said yesterday.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has allocated only P162 million for its reforestation program this year, but only P59 million of this would be used for actual tree planting in the country's 16 regions. The rest would go to personnel and operating expenses.

Corpus estimates that reforesting one hectare would cost at least P43,000. Thus, the Philippines would need P232 billion, or almost one-fourth

of the total 2005 national budget to plant 5.4 million hectares.

"If we wait for the national government, it will take more than 3,000 years. That's why the role of mayors and governors are indispensable in the reforestation campaign," said Corpus, chair of the National Resources Development Corp.

Speaking before non-government organizations during the civil society summit on the environment yesterday, Corpus presented the government's reforestation framework, which stresses the role of upland farmers and local government units in the campaign.

He said the campaign would not take off without the support of local officials and NGOs because reforestation without a

budget could only work under a self-reliant approach.

"I will be straightforward with you. The government has no capability to protect these forest areas from further degradation, or to expand them simply because there are not enough personnel to do reforestation," he said.

The Philippines has 7.2 million hectares of forest lands. The DENR is encouraging private tree plantations to help increase the country's forest cover, which is now down to 800,000 hectares or only 18 percent of the original forest cover.

The Environmental Science for Social Change estimates that with an average of 100,000 hectares of forests denuded every year, the Philippines would be left with 320,000 hectares of

forests by 2010.

Under Corpus' reforestation strategy, upland families who plant trees would get 70 percent of the proceeds from those trees while the local and national governments share the 30 percent.

In addition, the government would give security of tenure to some 20 million Filipinos living in forest areas, if they plant and guard the trees, Corpus said.

Business clubs, schools, parishes and NGOs, meanwhile, could try adopting a mountain, river, mangrove, park, highway as their contribution to reforestation, he said.

Corpus will be off next week to Maguindanao, Sta. Fe, Bantayan, Caliraya and Lake Lumut to help the local governments plant trees and mangroves.

'Auring's' death toll rises to 8

EIGHT people were confirmed killed, among them two children, while 11 were reported missing in the aftermath of tropical storm "Auring" which battered Eastern and Central Visayas, the National Disaster Coordinating Council said yesterday.

Six of the casualties drowned when a commercial vessel MV Esperanza capsized near the Ormoc City Pier around 3 a.m. March 17, at the height of Auring's fury.

The casualties were identified as Maria Gubalani, 51; Lito Guidocor, 47; Angelita Celendron, 42; Rey Celendron, 45; and Lina Soralta, 44, all from Camotes Island in Cebu.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has directed the NDCC to remind the Coast Guard to tighten their inspection of marine vessels to avoid sea mishaps during typhoons, like what happened in Ormoc City.

"Thank God it's not as big as the others (typhoons)," the President said after she was briefed on the casualties and damages caused by typhoon Auring.

NDCC said 939 families, or 4,793 persons were displaced by typhoon Auring. It also destroyed 1,181 houses in Leyte and Eastern Samar.

From her trip to Basilan, the President went straight to the NDCC headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo at 3:45 p.m. yesterday.

The President asked NDCC officials why MV Esperanza was still at sea despite the turbulent waters.

Col. Elma Aldea, administrator of the Office of Civil Defense, said the vessel was anchored at the pier hoping to weather the storm, but its anchor line broke.

It reportedly drifted about a mile and a half away from the shoreline and finally capsized. Eighteen passengers and seven crew members were rescued.

"We can't anticipate all cause of death till they happen but at least we can learn from this one. We can direct the Coast Guard to inspect (vessels more thoroughly)," she said.

Dona Z. Pazzibugan

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24

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, March 19, 2005

Joseph, Husband of Mary

1st Reading: 2 S 7:4-5, 12-14, 16
2nd Reading: Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22
Gospel: Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24 or Lk 2:41-51

Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and from her came Jesus who is called the Christ—the Messiah.

This is how Jesus Christ was born. Mary his mother had been given to Joseph in marriage but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Then Joseph, her husband, made plans to divorce her in all secrecy. He was an upright man, and in no way did he want to discredit her.

While he was pondering over this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She has conceived by the Holy Spirit, and now she will bear a son. You shall call him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do and he took his wife to his home.

Commentary

Today is the feast of Joseph, the dreamer, the just man who obeys the Word of God, in scripture and dreams seeking the life of those around him. He is the man who adopted a son who was the beloved child of God, taking the woman Mary and her child into his heart and caring for them, giving them life and protection. He names Jesus—Joshua—savior of his people and it is from Joseph that Jesus learns to be a man, a Jew, a human being under oppression in occupied territory, yet obedient to the Law and to the prophets. Like David, his ancestor who sought to build a house for the Mighty God, Joseph does build a house, a sanctuary and dwelling place for God, Emmanuel God with us in the embrace and reach of his daily work and love. Lord, may we dream like Joseph and be as just, knowing how to interpret the Word of God to protect all in harm's way.

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Jailbreak probers focusing on collusion

From page A1

Three of at least four guards near the jail during the initial stages of the jailbreak crisis were "half-sleep, half-awake," said Laciste, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region, quoting witnesses. The three guards, JO2 Rogelio de la

Cruz, JO2 Almedeo Salapate, both of whom died, and JO2 Albert Lubrio, who was critically wounded, apparently never had a chance, said Laciste.

He quoted one witness, Jalal Macarambon, a drug suspect who acted as a prison "trustee" and regularly brought the inmates their food, as saying that he passed the three guards at about

6 a.m. that Monday.

Macarambon found the guards slumped on a table, looking like they were only half-awake, said Laciste.

Collusion eyed

Yesterday, investigators released an initial report on the incident, covering the first few moments when the escape

attempt began until the time when authorities decided to form a crisis committee.

The report said the investigators would be focusing also on the possible collusion between the mutineers and the jail guards.

This possibility was being raised primarily because of the discrepancy in the number of firearms that were recovered in the aftermath of the siege, and the number of firearms taken from the slain and wounded BJMP personnel, Laciste said in his report to CIDG Director Chief Supt. Ricardo Daplat.

The police said the Abu Sayyaf men wrestled away four short firearms from the jail guards, but seven short firearms were recovered after the assault, Laciste said.

The assault by members of the Special Action Force on Tuesday morning killed 22 Abu Sayyaf suspects, some 27 hours after the attempted jailbreak. A SAF officer also died in the assault.

Witnesses' account

Three of the most notorious Abu Sayyaf detainees—Kosovo (Alhamsar Manatad Limbong), Global (Nadsmi Sabdullah) and Robot (Ghalib Andang)—who authorities said were behind the jail takeover died in the assault.

Based on the account of four witnesses, three of whom are detainees, investigators were able to piece together what happened on Monday morning.

Macarambon, known as "Ranchero" because of his work in the kitchen, passed the half-asleep guards and went straight to the third gate, which led to the cells.

Tristan Gabriel, another "trustee," held the key to the third gate. He opened it for Macarambon, Laciste said.

Another guard, identified as "Hussin," was inside the BJMP barracks located on the right side of the cells near the third gate.

"The moment the two—Tristan and Macarambon—went in, Kosovo's group rushed them and held them inside," Laciste said.

Other witnesses said it was at this point that they saw Kosovo and his companions hitting and kicking Tristan.

Kosovo and his "core group" of followers then went into the barracks and disarmed Hussin. It was Sadit Abdul Ganit Husim (Ka Lando) who took the gun. They locked Hussin and Tristan inside the barracks. (Hussin and Tristan survived the siege and the police assault.)

"That was gun one," Laciste said.

Disarmed and shot

While this was going on, Global and Robot were still inside the jail. The two Abu Sayyaf leaders were not part of the group that rushed outside although the police have accused them of planning the escape attempt with Kosovo.

After disarming Hussin, Kosovo, Ka Lando and at least two others went straight to the three guards.

"They woke up the three guards, disarmed them, got all their weapons, and shot them," Laciste said.

"Those were three guns, so we have four guns in all," he said.

There was a passageway leading to a gate on the left side of the jail complex. Kosovo and his men took this route, hoping to find their freedom just behind the wall.

But at least two guards, one positioned near the infirmary and another one on the tower, had been alerted by the shots.

Another guard, SFO4 Edgar Dajay, rushed to the passageway, but the inmates got him first. When the smoke cleared, Dajay lay slumped on

the floor, dead.

The two guards, identified as jail officers Bilibli and Tulao who were positioned strategically at the infirmary and the tower, shot it out with Kosovo and his men, driving them back and killing two inmates, Bohman Hadji Abdullah Paraha and Ibnu Mubarak.

Kosovo and his men failed to get Dajay's gun, Laciste said.

Members of the police's Special Action Force also responded, and helped drive the mutineers back to their cells.

Original escape plan

"Kosovo and his men retreated. That's when the standoff started," Laciste said.

Minutes later, the authorities set up the crisis management committee.

Lazaro said the original escape plan was for the ASG suspects to escape by taking hostage the judge, prosecutors and stenographers during a hearing on their criminal cases scheduled for Monday before the Pasig Regional Trial Court, but the hearing was canceled at the last minute.

The hearing was canceled because Judge Agnes Carpio had applied for a Holy Week leave, said Lazaro, who is handling the kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges against about 100 ASG suspects accused of kidnapping 52 persons, mostly elementary students, in Tumahubong, Basilan, on March 20, 2000.

Robot money

Of the 136 ASG suspects detained at the Taguig prison, only Andang is known to have the means, having allegedly gotten a large chunk of the hundreds of millions of pesos in ransom money that the kidnap gang got for the kidnapping of foreigners, said Lazaro.

"It is not far-fetched that he (Andang) could have financed the escape plot. The others do not have money to finance all these," Lazaro said.

He said that some months before the attempted jailbreak, the detained ASG men were seen flashing around a lot of money which they used in "paying" for the use of mobile phone of some prison guards.

"It was around this time that we learned that Kosovo was using a mobile phone," he said, adding that Kosovo may have owned a SIM card but was paying jail guards for the use of the latter's mobile phones.

High-fives

In a court hearing held five days before the failed jailbreak, Lazaro said Kosovo was observed complimenting one of the guards and making high-fives with him. Kosovo was also seen putting his hand on the guard's shoulder.

Lazaro said he could not recall the guard's name, but he was certain that the guard was one of those killed by the ASG suspects last Monday.

"They appeared to be very close," he said of the ASG suspects and the slain guard.

Lazaro said he had given the information to the Intelligence Group of the Philippine National Police, so the IG could have the source of Andang's money traced through the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

He said Gamal B. Baharan, alias Tapay, who is suspected of staging the Feb. 14 Makati bus bombing, had also informed him that the jailbreak would be done "on a Monday" and that it was to be executed while the suspects were at the hearing that Monday.

He said this scenario was deemed workable since about a hundred ASG men were brought to trial hearing with only a few prison guards watching them. *With a report from Jocelyn R. Uy*

GMA calls special...

From page A1

in the Philippines that will lead to the creation of more opportunities for our people."

3-week break

At the lower chamber, it seems there is no stopping House members from taking their three-week Lenten break.

Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said in a phone interview the House would oppose the holding of a special session just to pass amendments to the VAT law.

Nograles said the House should not be blamed for the Senate's failure to pass its version of the VAT measure.

"We gave it our best shot. [The rule is] finished or not finished, pass your papers," he said.

The Lower House adjourned Thursday night, effectively shelving final approval of the measure until Congress resumes sessions on April 11.

"We'll ratify in on April 11. But at least we can have a bicam (bicameral conference committee) during the break. Ratification will only take 30 seconds," Nograles said.

Ready for bicam

In anticipation of the passage of the measure in the Senate, the House already constituted a contingent for the bicam to be led by Nograles and Jesli Lapus, chair of the House ways and means committee.

Should the bicameral conference succeed in reconciling the two versions in three days, the measure in its final form would be returned to the two chambers for separate adoption.

Only then can the President sign the bill into law.

Drilon said the failure to pass the VAT bill before the Holy Week recess would have no adverse repercussions on the economy.

"I don't think the economy will collapse if we take this up after the Lenten break," he said.

Drilon said the Senate leadership had no choice but to give Madrigal the "opportunity to clarify issues that she has not clarified" and Osmeña "more time to study the measure."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel

Jr. rose to briefly interpellate Sen. Ralph Recto on the measure, which was passed on first reading last week.

Palace to blame

Administration Sen. Joker Arroyo blamed Malacañang for the Senate's failure to pass the VAT bill, saying it had not thrown its "full support" behind the measure.

He said the Senate might end up passing a "zero VAT" bill, which would not ensure the cash-strapped government would get the revenues it needs.

The senator said the dilemma facing the Senate majority bloc was aggravated by Malacañang's silence on the issue.

While the House had increased the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent and lifted some exemptions, the Senate wanted to retain the present rate but lift exemptions enjoyed by the energy sector, he said.

But Malacañang, although it earlier favored the House version, was unsure whether the Senate version could fill come up with the P80-billion target revenues, he said.

Arroyo said that since the Senate did not want to change the current VAT rate, its version of the bill relied solely on the lifting of VAT exemptions to come up with the needed revenues.

Zero Vat for IPPs

"But Malacañang gave us the signal that it doesn't want the lifting apparently to protect big businesses, so we yielded to it," Arroyo said.

Apart from seeking a 10 to 12 percent increase in the VAT rate, Malacañang was pushing for the retention of the zero-VAT rate privileges enjoyed by the independent power producers, an issue that puts it on a major collision course with most senators, said Arroyo.

Only the proposal to increase the corporate income tax from the present 32 percent to 35 percent would be left in the Senate version, ensuring a net tax take of only P10 billion, Arroyo said.

So the Senate would be forced to pass a measure which would not solve the government's fiscal problem, he said.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1577, Series of 2005

Satur bares plot vs Left in Congress

By Philip C. Tubeza and DJ Yap

IS THE government out to oust the Left's representatives in Congress?

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo raised this question yesterday after another leftist activist was killed in Pampanga on Thursday night, bringing to 18 the number of militant activists killed in the first quarter of the year.

Victor "Tatang Ben" Concepcion, 66, Anakpawis municipal coordinator in Mexico, Pampanga and AMC secretary general, was allegedly killed in front of his son's house in Angeles City.

Ocampo said the killings, the changes in the government's peace panel, and the return of Norberto Gonzales as National Security Adviser last month had raised concerns within the mainstream Left that the administration wanted to remove its representatives in Congress.

"We are trying to figure out what this

means...Gonzales had said that he will continue building cases against Bayan Muna with the intention of denying us representation," Ocampo said.

"There seems to be a grand scheme to oust us from Congress," he added.

Gonzales had accused Bayan Muna and its allies that also have representatives in Congress—Anakpawis and Gabriela party-list groups—of funding the New People's Army, a charge the groups vehemently denied.

Ocampo also noted that the government changed the composition of its panel in the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front although there were no scheduled formal negotiations.

He said Silvestre Bello III and Jose "Apeng" Yap were removed even though they had already established rapport with the NDF negotiators.

"Even (Ilocos Sur governor) Chavit Singson was told to lay off. He was trying to help in the negotiations," Ocam-

po said.

He said that since 2001, 49 Bayan Muna members had been killed. The circumstantial evidence in these murders point to the military's involvement in the killings, Ocampo said.

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano said Concepcion was "the 18th victim of political assassination in the first three months of the year. What's alarming is that the last eight victims were killed only in the last two weeks."

He added that the killing of Concepcion "confirms that there's a grand design and an undeclared policy to annihilate leaders and members of the legitimate mass organizations and progressive parties."

Militant groups Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela, Karapatan and Bayan also scored the killing of peasant activist Concepcion and described the country's situation as "worse than martial law" during a forum yesterday at the Uni-

versity of the Philippines Asian Center.

In a statement, Ocampo noted the rising number of murdered activists was "shocking" and pointed to a situation equally dangerous as martial law.

"At least during martial law, it was declared. We know what organizations are outlawed. Today there are no formal declarations and yet it seems agents of the state target legitimate organizations, activists and even party-list (groups)," Ocampo said in a statement.

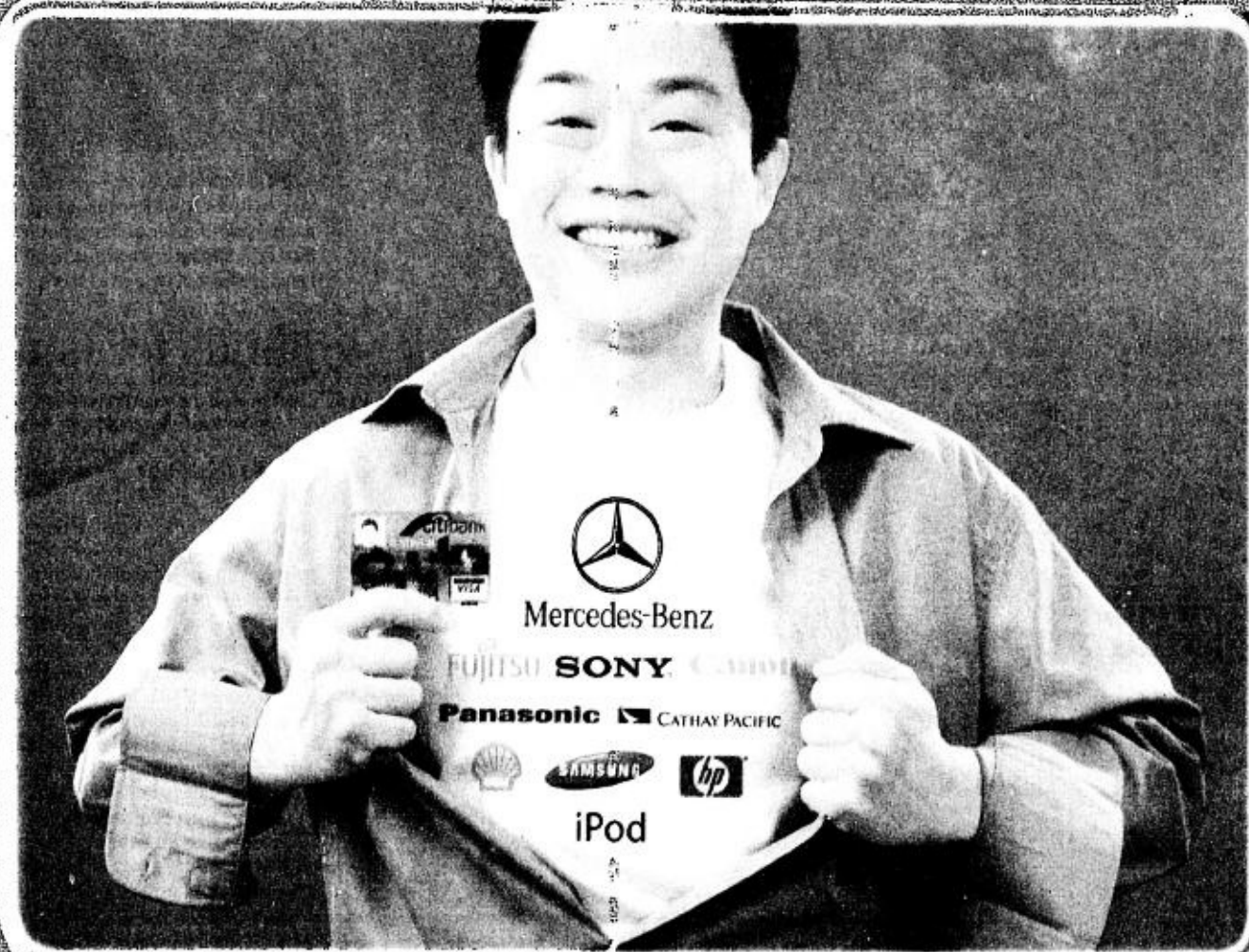
"During Martial Law, you at least knew what unit of the Philippine Constabulary was involved, but now, there are no rules being followed, not even the benefit of an Arrest, Search and Seizure Order commonly issued during the martial law days," said Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casio in the same statement.

Concepcion's killing followed that of activists Joel Reyes and Ernesto Bang, who were put down in Camarines Norte earlier this week.

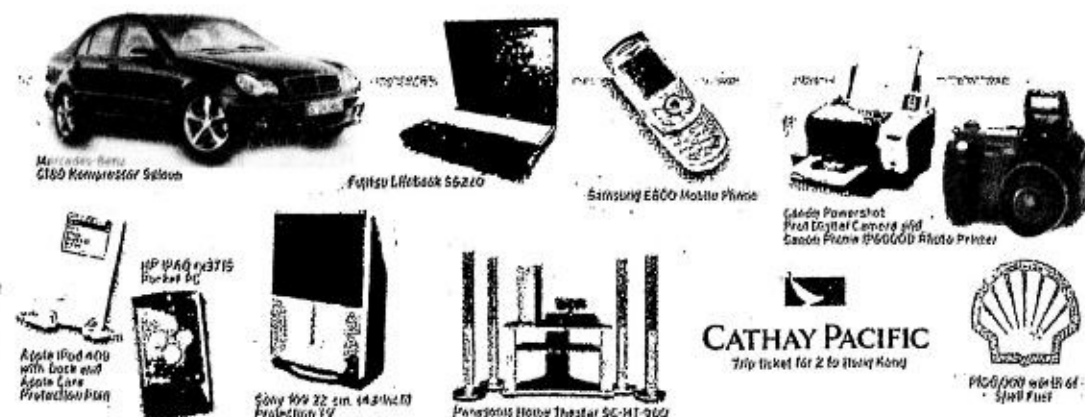


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REXONA RON 40ML
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

6,000 Syrian troops pull out of Lebanon

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United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan expects Syria to fully withdraw its forces before Lebanon's May elections, UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen said after briefing Annan on his recent talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Roed-Larsen declined to say if Assad had committed himself to that timetable.

In Washington, a US state de-

partment official expressed skepticism the Syrians intended to be out by May.

"I think they are keeping their options open and they are trying to keep from being cornered and for that reason you have a disturbing lack of specificity," the official said.

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That stance could wreck a bid

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Syria bowed to international demands for a troop withdrawal after huge Beirut street protests sparked by the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri in a Feb. 14 bombing.

A Lebanese-Syrian committee is to meet in early April to discuss any future Syrian presence, the security source said.

Witnesses said the last two Syr-

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A Lebanese security chief said he and his colleagues, all close to Syria, were ready to go to court to disprove opposition charges they may have had a hand in Hariri's killing.

Reuters

May matinding hulaan na mangyayari.

Abangan sa ABS-CBN at Studio 23

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TRIVIA GAME PROMO

PROMO MECHANICS:

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a. From March 19 to 30, 2005 consumers may call 895-9484 for Metro Manila and 1-800-1-888-2774 for Visayas and Mindanao for their answers (TINA OR CARLA).

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Per DOH-BFAD Permit No. 0320 Series of 2005



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AFP



ACTIVIST Rebekah Gatlyn, 19, wears tape over her mouth, which represents the silencing of Terri Schiavo, during a protest outside the Pinellas County Courthouse in downtown Clearwater, Fla. Gatlyn is with The Cause, a non-denominational Christian activist group, protesting against a court order to remove Schiavo's feeding tube.

US in painful decision over right-to-die case

MIAMI—US doctors may on Friday turn off the feeding tube of a Florida woman who has been in a vegetative state for 15 years while her husband and parents fight over whether she should be kept alive.

A court has ruled the tube can be removed from 41-year-old Terri Schiavo at 1 p.m. but legislators in Florida and Washington are trying to pass legislation to stop the move and activist groups across America have taken up Schiavo's case.

Schiavo's heart stopped in 1990 inflicting severe brain damage and she has been in hospital ever since. Doctors have said her condition is irreversible and her husband, Michael Schiavo, says his wife told him she would not want to be kept alive artificially.

Her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, have fought attempts to let their daughter die, insisting she could get better.

Experts have said Terri Schiavo would die in about two weeks if the tube is taken out.

In the final hours, the parents and their sup-

porters fought desperately to stop that happening.

They appealed to the US Supreme Court, and Florida Circuit Court Judge George Greer scheduled a hearing Thursday to consider a request from Florida to halt the removal of the tube.

The Florida House of Representatives passed a bill Thursday to block the withholding of food and water from patients in a persistent vegetative state who did not leave specific instructions regarding their care. The Florida Senate defeated a different bill on the same topic.

The US Congress also passed rival motions that will need intense efforts to be made into workable legislation.

The House of Representatives voted late Wednesday to give federal courts the power to review cases where life support patients do not leave written instructions on whether they want to be kept alive.

But the Senate on Thursday approved a measure that only mentions Schiavo and would allow a final medical review in her case.

AFP

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Verdict in Air India bomb case too late for mother

BOMBAY—For 73-year-old Indian mother Mukhtaben Bhat, the battle for justice was lost long ago during the 20 years it took to investigate the bombing of Air India flight 182 and bring two Sikh activists to trial.

The mid-air explosion over the Atlantic off the coast of Ireland in 1985, the deadliest bombing of an airliner, killed 329 people, including Bhat's son, grandson and daughter-in-law.

"Twenty years is not a small time. It's a very, very long time," she says in her Bombay home, holding a worn photograph of her son and his wife. "Most of the relatives of those died are also not alive."

"If the verdict had come out in 4-5 years, people could have hoped for something, but after 20 years it does not matter."

Judge Ian Bruce Josephson in Canada's British Columbia Supreme Court on Wednesday acquitted Sikh activists Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajaib Singh Bagri of murder and conspiracy over the bombing of the flight en route from Canada to India.

"The verdict was the last straw that we were hanging to. It is a big let down," Dhaval S. Koradia, a cousin of one of the victims, said.

While anguished relatives of the victims called for a government inquiry, families of the two accused were elated.

"The court's verdict is great. We were hoping that he would be acquitted. We knew that he could have never done such a thing, said Pyara Singh, Bagri's brother. "We have been fighting this case for so

many years. We are very happy." Bagri's mother, Ratan Kaur, says her son can finally come home.

"We have been getting congratulatory calls since last night. We are very happy," said Surinder Kaur, one of Malik's aunts.

The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak committee, a leading Sikh religious body, also welcomed the acquittal.

"I want to congratulate both Malik and Bagri. We have our condolences for relatives of all the 329 people who were killed on board, but we are also happy for the justice given to both of them," Rajinder Singh Mehta, a committee member said.

The 20-year probe into the Flight 182 attack and a related bombing that killed two workers at Tokyo's Narita airport cost about \$110 million, but the judge ruled the evidence against the two Sikhs had "fallen markedly short."

Investigators allege the bombings were the work of Vancouver-based Sikh separatists seeking revenge for the Indian army's bloody 1984 storming of Sikhism's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple in the northern city of Amritsar.

Canadian authorities have not yet said if they will appeal.

"An appeal against this judgment when everything has been decided on merit is not easy. The appeal should be for finding the culprit who has done it," R.S. Sandhu, brother-in-law of S.S. Bhinder, one of the flight's pilots.

Reuters

Bush vows to help sisters of Belfast man killed by IRA

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush promised to help the McCartney sisters from Belfast get justice for their slain brother, and encouraged efforts to put the Northern Ireland peace process back on track.

Bush on Thursday met the five sisters and fiancé of Robert McCartney after snubbing Gerry Adams, leader of the Irish nationalist Sinn Féin party, who has been a traditional St. Patrick's Day visitor to the White House.

The McCartney family has received widespread political and media attention in the United States since arriving this week to press their campaign to bring their brother's killers to justice.

Members of the Irish Republican Army, a paramilitary ally of Sinn Féin, have been blamed over Robert McCartney's Jan. 30 murder.

"We pressed on the president the importance of getting justice for

Robert, and he said he's 100 percent behind our campaign," sister Catherine McCartney said Thursday.

"Ireland as a whole, and the peace process require justice for people back in Ireland," she said.

White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said the president praised the women's bravery and tenacity, confronting an armed Republican faction IRA that has been known to resort to violence and intimidation to silence opponents.

"The president thanked the McCartney family for their courage," McClellan said.

"He knows that their courage comes from their love. And the president let them know that he shared in their grieving over the loss of their loved one. And he expressed to them that justice will prevail."

The US leader also promised unspecified help to bring their brother's killers to justice.

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US has been 'outsourcing' torture for 20 years—CIA chief

WASHINGTON—Suspected terrorists in US custody have been transferred to third countries for the past 20 years, CIA director Porter Goss told senators Thursday, as the United States has come under fire for "outsourcing" torture to nations with questionable human rights records.

"I believe that if you go back and you take a look about transfers—helping other countries deal with terrorists—you will find this is a process that's been going on for more than 20 years," Goss told the

Senate armed services committee.

"I know of no instances where the intelligence community is outside the law on this," he said.

Goss also said that "serious allegations" of suspects being tortured abroad that have "been brought to the attention of the proper authorities have been referred properly for investigation."

"I know for a fact that torture is not productive. That's not professional interrogation. We don't do torture," he said.

On Wednesday, President George W. Bush said that he does not support torture, and noted that he received assurances from countries where US officials send prisoners that they will not be tortured.

However, Sen. Ted Kennedy, a leading Democrat, said Thursday he was skeptical about the assurances.

"Many of us are deeply concerned about the administration's cavalier attitude toward international law and the prohibitions against torture," Kennedy said in a statement.

Goss earlier voiced optimism about Iraq, saying there had already been a manifest "change of thinking" in that country since the Jan. 30 election.

Still, he cautioned: "Having said all that, there is no misjudging the fact that there is still intimidation—willful intimidation—primarily not aimed at our forces as much as innocent people and the newly being stood up Iraqi security and police forces. And that is, of course, intentional by the terrorists."

The chief of military intelligence, Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby, also said there had been some changes for the better in Iraq.

"Since the 30 January election, I believe we see some changes. Attacks had averaged about 60 per day and (in) the last two weeks

dropped (to) approximately 50 per day and appear to be dropping still further, which brings them considerably below the high level of activity that existed last November," he said.

"It's too early to say whether this is the trend. We need to be watchful and assess these changes as we see them evolve," Jacoby said.

Goss also called for the creation of a "national university of intelligence—not just for the CIA, but for all agencies within the intelligence community." He said he would present the proposal to national intelligence director John Negroponte after Negroponte is confirmed by the Senate.

"This will help to define a new intelligence community culture, better coordinate the way we do business across government and enhance a willing cooperation among all," Goss said.

In November, the White House urged the CIA to increase the number of its agents on the ground by 50 percent, as well as bolster the ranks of its analysts and language experts.

Goss said he needs more people with international experience. "I need language capability I don't have. I need cultural experience and background I don't have. I need more diversification." AFP



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Workers remove the last remaining statue in Madrid of former Spanish dictator Francisco Franco before dawn, March 17. Spain's development ministry took down the statue of Franco mounted on a horse, saying it was part of a larger public works program and that it was "not appreciated by the majority of the people." REUTERS

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Europe cool, aid groups dismayed over World Bank role for Wolfowitz

LONDON—European capitals reacted coolly Thursday to the nomination of US deputy defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz to be the next head of the World Bank, but aid groups voiced dismay and some puzzlement.

Reaction to the surprise nomination ranged from the outright hostile—"a disaster," one critic said—to the tepid, with diplomats cautious in their language.

In London, a spokesperson for Prime Minister Tony Blair's office said Britain would hold "consultations" about any appointment.

"It's for the Bank's board to take the decision on the appointment of the president of the Bank, and we are not going to get into a commentary on that selection process," he added.

Britain's finance minister Gordon Brown earlier hailed Wolfowitz as "a very distinguished person" but avoided other comment.

However, Britain's former international development secretary Clare Short denounced the nomination of an arch-conservative seen as a key architect of the US-led war on Iraq. US President George W. Bush's choice to name Wolfowitz was akin to showing "two fingers to the world," she said, referring to a vulgar British gesture.

"This is really shocking. It's as though they (the Americans) are trying to wreck our international systems," she told Channel 4 news.

In Brussels, a European Commission spokesperson said it hoped the next World Bank chief would "put development at the center" when current president James Wolfensohn stands down later this year.

She dodged a question on whether European nations, deeply divided over the Iraq war, would try to scupper Wolfowitz's appointment, pointing out that the commission—the executive arm of the 25-member European Union—"is not on the board" of the Bank.

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier called the nomination a "proposal" which would be examined.

Germany's development minister Heidmarie Wiese-Zeul noted that "the enthusiasm in old Europe is not exactly overwhelming."

"I doubt the Europeans will be able to block it as George W. Bush probably cleared it among European leaders: Tony Blair and possibly even Jacques Chirac," Fraser Cameron, director of studies at the European Policy Center in Brussels, said.

"It appears to be a done deal," Jerome Sgard, of the Paris-based International Information and Prospective Studies Center, concurred.

The head of the French branch of the antiglobalization group Attac, Jacques Nikonoff, said the selection of Wolfowitz confirmed "the determination of the United States to maintain its control of the World Bank, not to develop its origin" mission, which is to promote development, but to integrate it into its political-military strategy.

"I think this will trigger many negative reactions, both from Western countries and from poor countries," he said.

Some critics called for an overhaul of the "gentleman's agreement" process under which the World Bank chief is generally nominated by Washington and the head of the International Monetary Fund by Europeans.

"Governments should abolish the unspoken 'gentleman's agreement,'" said Bernice Romero, advocacy director of the British charity Oxfam International.

"The administration in power will put people in charge who fit their world view," said Matt Phillips, head of public affairs at Save the Children UK. "So clearly the Bush administration is going to put a Bush appointee into its little fiefdom at the World Bank." AFP



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Israel, Palestinians promise to extend truce

JERUSALEM—Israel and the Palestinians pledged Thursday to observe an informal truce until the year-end although militants stopped short of declaring the full ceasefire the international community had hoped for.

All 13 major factions agreed on the conditional period of calm at crunch talks presided over by Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas in the Egyptian capital.

"The participants have reached an agreement on a political program until the end of the current year which states their commitment to respecting the atmosphere of calm currently prevail-

ing in exchange for an end to aggressions against our people," they said in a Cairo Declaration.

Israel immediately vowed to continue to refrain from military offensives as long as the Palestinians observed a de facto peace, in keeping with a promise made at a summit in Egypt's Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh last month.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon welcomed the Palestinian decision to observe a lull as a "first and positive step" in a telephone call with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who briefed him on the talks.

"But if we want to progress in the peace process, the problem

of the terrorist groups must be solved," he cautioned, describing the factions' agreement as "temporary."

A Sharon aide said Israel would not launch any military offensives in the occupied Palestinian territories as long as the armed groups abided by the truce.

"At the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, Israel agreed not to launch offensive operations as long as there is a complete end to violence on the Palestinian side and we are sticking to that commitment," said the official.

Israel has repeatedly demanded that armed groups be disman-

ted in keeping with the roadmap peace plan, which the international community has been battling to revive amid a new-found optimism in the Middle East.

Palestinian faction leaders have stressed the difference between extending the cooling down period they have observed since Sharm el-Sheikh and a formal accord on a truce, for which they would make concrete demands of Israel.

The Cairo Declaration came as Egyptian-Israeli relations took a step forward Thursday with the arrival of Cairo's newly appointed ambassador to Israel after a four-

year diplomatic hiatus caused by the Palestinian uprising.

Mohammed Asim Ibrahim was welcomed at Tel Aviv by officials from the Israeli foreign ministry and was to present his credentials on Monday together with a new Jordanian ambassador, the foreign ministry said.

Jordan and Egypt—the only two Arab states to have signed peace treaties with Israel—announced the return of their ambassadors after the Sheikh el-Sheikh summit on Feb. 8.

On the home front, Sharon stepped up efforts to force his 2005 budget through parliament

by March 31 to save the government from collapse and shore up his plan to pull out of the Gaza Strip by the end of August.

The outcome of the vote, which is far from certain, has been touted as the last political chance for staunch opponents to scupper Sharon's plan to recall all Israeli soldiers and settlers from Gaza by the end of August.

Speaking to members of his right-wing Likud party Thursday, many of which are vehemently opposed to his pullout plan, Sharon said that voting against the budget could be tantamount to toppling the government. AFP



PHOTO taken June 21, 2004 shows relatives mourning over the body of 1-year-old Ali, who died of malnutrition in a refugee camp in El-Genefina in Darfur, Sudan. More than 180,000 people have been killed in the conflict in Sudan's Darfur region in the past 18 months, UN humanitarian affairs chief Jan Egeland said March 14.

UN Council urged to act on Darfur

GENEVA—A group of UN experts called Thursday for concrete action by the UN Security Council to end the civil war in the western Sudanese region of Darfur, where it said extra-judicial executions, rape, torture, abductions and forced displacement are daily occurrences.

"Despite efforts by the international community to commit troops and assistance to the region, the violence continues virtually unabated... and the threat of famine is looming," the experts said in a statement released on the sidelines of the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva.

They urged the Security Council to act immediately to adopt concrete measures to end the violence, which they said was occurring on "a widespread and systematic manner and continue on a daily basis."

More than 180,000 people have died in the Darfur region over the past 18 months while 1.8 million have been displaced, UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland said Wednesday.

After black African rebels in Darfur rose up against Sudan's Arab-led government, Khartoum turned to proxy militias—the Janjaweed—to put down the rebellion, and those militias have been blamed for a scorched-earth cam-

paign of murder, rape and pillage.

Peace talks between the government and the Darfur rebels are at a standstill.

The statement said: "Even with the deployment of African Union troops, in the past nine months the number of displaced people has continued to rise and attacks on civilians have persisted."

However, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo on Thursday praised the work of the AU mission there. "I am reasonably satisfied with the African Union mission in Darfur," he said during a visit to Berlin. "I have been there and I must say, wherever we have African Union forces peace and harmony have been maintained. We need that a little bit more."

The experts meeting in Geneva included the UN human rights expert in Sudan, Emmanuel Akwei Addo; the UN secretary general's special representative for displaced people, Walter Kalin; and the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, Jean Ziegler.

They also called for the Darfur case also to be referred to International Court of Justice.

The UN Security Council has passed several resolutions ordering Sudan to rein in the Janjaweed and improve security in Darfur. These have had little effect, however, and the top UN body is struggling to find ways to give new urgency to international efforts to help the Darfur population. AFP

Turkey landslide buries 17 people

ANKARA—Seventeen people were buried and seven others were injured Thursday when a landslide swept through a small village in Sivas province in northeastern Turkey, officials said.

"Twenty-four houses and 17 people were buried in the landslide," Sivas Gov. Hasan Canpolat told the Anatolia news agency.

"We are facing a great disaster," he said. "Rescue efforts are being carried out in difficult conditions."

Dozens of rescuers and earth-moving machines were dispatched to the stricken area about 400 km northeast of Ankara, but small landslides continued, preventing the use of the machines, Canpolat said.

The rescuers, who could use only small instruments such as shovels, were expected to continue working throughout the night.

Seven people were hospitalized with injuries, a crisis desk in Ankara said.

"When I heard that big noise I thought warplanes were passing over the village," the local imam, Hamit Keskin, told Anatolia. "When I went out I saw the mountains coming down on me and I started running."

The province's deputy governor Ali Manti said that the landslide was caused by heavy rains unsettling the mushy ground typical of the region.

The site was previously declared risky for settlement by local civil construction authorities, but residents refused to evacuate their homes perched on a slope, Canpolat said.

The Red Crescent sent tents and humanitarian supplies to the village.

Another landslide occurred in Ulubey, in the neighboring province of Ordu, but there were no reports of casualties, Anatolia said.

It struck a neighborhood that had been partially evacuated since 2000 due to the risk of landslides. AFP

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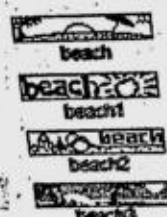
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OPINION

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Publisher ISAGANI YAMBOT
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There ought to be a law

THE FRUSTRATED escape attempt of Abu Sayyaf leaders put a damper on the handover of command in the Philippine National Police. Reactions to recent policy recommendations made by Gen. Efren Abu have also resulted in the deferment of his confirmation as Armed Forces chief of staff by the Commission on Appointments. However, both recent appointments—of Abu as AFP chief of staff and of Arturo Lomibao as director general of the PNP—again highlight a lingering, institutional problem crying out for congressional resolution.

EDITORIALS President Macapagal-Arroyo has been following a revolving-door policy on appointments to top police and military posts. To satisfy the craving of officers to end their careers at the top, appointments are made on a fleeting basis, which then requires them (in the eyes of the administration) to be seconded to civilian positions of authority afterwards. The result is, generals are made commanders of their services or their organizations for very brief periods and then placed in freshly minted positions in the Cabinet, with a corresponding requirement to keep moving retired officers up the civilian chain of authority.

It is reassuring that there is a lingering sense of professionalism and institutional vision among high-ranking officers. At least, to the extent that individuals such as Abu have made it clear that they would continue reforms begun during their predecessors' tour of duty. The elimination of the graft-ridden Logistics Command is one such overdue example.

This, however, cannot hide the reality that keeping the continuation of such policies within the realm of discretion serves to keep organizations such as the military susceptible to a personalistic, instead of a professional, frame of mind.

There have been calls to fix the terms of top officers tasked with crucial responsibilities in the AFP. Originally, such calls were principally concerned with the need to give the superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy enough time to institute rational changes, and see them through. The revolving-door policy, which makes political payback easy and real reforms difficult, should finally be stopped.

Fixed terms will provide officers the opportunity to not only make changes but also to oversee them until they start to show results. It would also force the executive department to more seriously consider the repercussions of such appointments. More importantly, setting fixed terms for the top AFP and PNP officials would insulate these organizations from the most obvious forms of political deal-making and patronage, not to mention undue interference by the powers-that-be.

Fixed terms will provide officers the opportunity to not only make changes but also to oversee them until they start to show results. It would also force the executive department to more seriously consider the repercussions of such appointments. More importantly, setting fixed terms for the top AFP and PNP officials would insulate these organizations from the most obvious forms of political deal-making and patronage, not to mention undue interference by the powers-that-be.

Incendiary

THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines has no business giving its opinion on religious matters, including whether or not victims of shootouts deserve to go to heaven.

"They are not true Muslims. They are not true believers," Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, military spokesperson, has said, referring to the 24 prison inmates killed earlier this week in the Camp Bagong Diwa uprising. "That's why Allah sent them to hell." Other military officials have expressed alarm that ordinary Muslims regard the dead men as martyrs. "This is the distorted interpretation (of the Koran that is taught) by the Tabligh" (a group of male preachers in the Middle East who are suspected of teaching radical Islam), added Pascual.

But nothing qualifies Pascual or his commanders to comment on such things. Questions of faith are best left to the competent authorities of a faith. Secular military authorities, most of them Christians, should be the last to pontificate on matters they aren't competent to address. There is a pressing need for non-Muslims to attempt to understand the complexities and nuances of the Islamic religion, and an equally urgent need for Muslims to enlighten non-Muslims as to the proper understanding of the tenets of their faith.

Gratuitous comments such as the ones made by Pascual are incendiary and irresponsible, coming at a time when tempers are again on the rise. Such statements only serve to stoke further the resentment of Muslim Filipinos.



Confirmation of appointments

I FULLY support Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's position that President Macapagal-Arroyo should not reappoint Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to the Commission on Elections after his nomination to that body was by-passed by the Commission on Appointments the other week.

This action, according to Pimentel, was "an unmistakable signal that the CA members consider (Garcillano) unworthy of the constitutional post because of his tainted moral background and his reported involvement in electoral fraud."

"If the President is serious about removing officials who are a disgrace to the public service," the opposition senator said, "she should start by not appointing Garcillano."

There are three things the Commission on Appointments may do when the President of the Philippines submits to it a nomination for a public office while Congress is in session or an ad interim appointment to the said office issued during the legislative recess.

As a courtesy to the President, the appointments body usually confirms his choice for the members of the Cabinet, as his official family, without much delay or objection. There are occasions, however, when approval is withheld owing to questions about the subject's qualifications that require more careful examination. An example is the case of Secretary Angelo Reyes whose confirmation is still hanging fire because of criticisms about his record and integrity.

If the Commission is unable to grant its imprimatur to the President's recommendation, it may, to spare him some embarrassment (and displeasure) and to give his nominee or ad interim appointee a broad hint, simply by-pass him until Congress adjourns and with it the Commission too. By-passing is a tactful and charitable way of telling the aspirant that he is unacceptable but without saying baldly that he has been rejected.

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



The third method is seldom employed except in extreme cases where the subject is so clearly unfit for the office to which he has been named that there is no alternative but to reject him outright. If I do remember some unworthies who were subjected to such disgraceful treatment, they will nevertheless remain anonymous in this article.

A person tactfully by-passed only but actually blackballed by the Commission should be decent enough to accept his fate and not expect, much less work for, his reappointment by an accommodating President. The President himself should respect the verdict of the Commission on Appointments instead of dishonoring it by insisting on his disapproved choice.

It is another matter where the candidate is by-passed because the Commission did not have enough opportunity to consider his name, say, because of insufficient information about him or more pressing business before it. Reappointment of the by-passed appointee would be justified in such circumstances. But reappointment of a by-passed nominee found unacceptable on the merits would be unwelcome to the Commission as a sign of the President's intransigence or his disrespect for the body.

The facility with which the President's recommendations to the Commission on Appointments are approved is an indication of his influence over its members. Such members are apportioned from among the several parties in the two houses of Congress as mandated by the

Constitution. The body is controlled by the dominant parties in the two chambers, which are nominally headed by the President of the Philippines, and is chaired by the Senate President, who is usually allied with the administration.

It may be recalled, though, that during the presidential election campaign of 1946, President Sergio Osmeña Sr. did not have an easy time in securing confirmation of his appointments from the Commission on Appointments then chaired by his rival, Senate President Manuel A. Roxas. In 1949, President Elpidio Quirino's reelection bid was opposed by former Senate President Jose Avelino, who was none-too-ready either to cooperate with his former party mate.

President Arroyo should have no trouble with Senate President Franklin Drilon as they belong to the same majority, whatever they call it. There are, however, a number of independent-minded senators like Senator Pimentel whose past sad experience with the Comelec has made him more exacting in the selection of its members. And well should he be if that reputable body is to regain its once respected name.

I do not know Commissioner Garcillano personally and have little information about his official qualifications and record. What I do recall is that he and another obscure person were appointed to the Comelec by President Arroyo on the day following the adjournment of Congress in February last year, obviously to enable them to assume office immediately.

What happened to their ad interim appointments upon the resumption of the congressional session last June? They were probably not confirmed before its adjournment, which is why Garcillano's apparently new appointment is again being challenged by Senator Pimentel—this time successfully, I hope.

Questionable revenue estimates

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



The P10 billion in additional revenue attributed to this measure came out of thin air, figuratively speaking. Neither the Department of Finance nor the Bureau of Internal Revenue was prepared (or was asked) to make an estimate of its impact. It was the President who came out with the figure, and she has not explained how it was derived. But given that the BIR and Customs collections have been pretty much on target, which may also say something about how targets are set, the probability that P10 billion is an overestimate is pretty high.

Let's look at the estimates of increased revenues from the sin tax bill (which covers cigarettes, beer and "distilled spirits") estimated at P15 billion a year. A closer look makes it difficult to see how that amount was derived. For 2005, for example, Congress estimates the additional tax take from cigarettes to be P5.3 billion, but this assumes that cigarette "removals" (the volume taken out of the cigarette factories) will have increased by at least 25 percent between 2003 and 2005, an assumption that has no basis from past trends. But, even if you take that, and then add the estimated additional revenue from beer (P2.9 billion) and from the stronger stuff (P2.1 billion), estimates taken at face value for no other reason than that I don't know enough about this aspect, the total will only be P10.3 billion, a far cry from P15 billion. The only figure close to P15 billion I see from the computations provided to me is the amount of P15.78 billion estimated additional revenues from cigarette taxes in the year

2011, when all the higher rates will finally kick in. And just for purposes of comparison, in the case of cigarettes, an estimate made by the Public Finance Institute of the Philippines (PFIPI) shows that the incremental revenue, from cigarette taxes in 2005 will be only P3.9 billion.

Finally, let's go to that much-vaunted Senate VAT bill, also known as the Recto bill, a bill apparently so hastily prepared that there are some perverse, and for some sectors, injurious results: e.g., the cabaret and night club sector, previously paying amusement taxes of 18 percent, was brought under VAT coverage, and now will pay less than half of what it used to pay; the banking sector, which was paying a 3-percent gross receipts tax in lieu of VAT, was brought under VAT coverage, but the 3-percent GRT was not repealed, so banks will now have to pay a 13-percent tax (less input VAT credits); and worst of all, investors in capital intensive industries, who were able to be credited immediately for the VAT input taxes they paid, now have to spread out their tax credits over a five-year period, effectively discouraging investments.

Those considerations aside, the fact is that the net revenue impact of the Recto bill appears to be grossly overestimated. An estimate of the Recto bill, again by the PFIPI, comes up with an annual revenue increase of only P15.5 billion instead of the P64.3 billion it is touted to generate: P8.3 billion from VAT-related measures, plus P7.2 billion from the increase in corporate income tax to 35 percent for the next three years. Moreover, if the Recto bill really intended the 10-percent VAT on banks to replace the 3-percent GRT, the repeal of the GRT would reduce the government's tax take by another P10 billion, thereby reducing the net revenue increase to only P5.5 billion. A far cry from P64.3 billion.

And the tragedy of it is that the ultimate victims of all those questionable estimates are the Filipino people.

Justice for PNB victims

POLITICAL
TIDBITSBelinda
Oliveras-Cunanan

rather naïve—senior citizens who guarded their retirement funds zealously but also wanted to earn more. But precisely because they are conservative, it's unthinkable that they would gamble their lifetime savings to take out a loan against their own savings in order to lend to "anonymous" borrowers.

Take Virginia Pollard, who first exposed the fraud pulled by Gregorio and Miranda to the PNB head office, which led to their investigation and dismissal. Pollard, a housewife, had built up sizable dollar as well as peso accounts. In 2000, the two officials enticed her to entrust her money to them, promising a minimum earning of 3 percent per month. Pollard was able to partially recover her dollar deposit, but her peso deposit has not been returned nearly five years later.

Dr. Antonio Mota was a doctor in the Negros Occidental Provincial Hospital until he retired, while his wife Elvira was a pharmacist who gave up her profession to take care of their family. As their daughter Elvira Mota Rodriguez, who's now fighting for them, put it, her parents never used a credit card because they did not want to have any "utang." Like many older folks, they believed in spending wisely and keeping money in the bank for a rainy date. They chose the PNB because they thought it was a good bank. In May 2000, Gregorio and Miranda convinced Mrs. Mota that her time deposit would earn a "special rate" because of her VIP status with the bank. But when someone from the bank called her up to remind her of her "loan," she was shocked and she began to worry about it.

LAST Thursday, I began the truly sad story about how depositors of the Philippine National Bank now numbering about 25 (rumors say there are 48) were defrauded of their hard-earned lifetime savings through a clever scheme pulled by former PNB Sucat branch manager Teresita Fe Gregorio and customer service officer Gloria Miranda. The pattern seems to be the same in all the cases, and it's possible that this elaborate scam is going on not only in the PNB but also in other banks. But the tragedy is that the PNB continues to play deaf and dumb to the depositors' pleas to get back their money, even after firing the bank officers who defrauded them.

The two bank officers were able to convince 25 depositors to transfer their local and foreign currency deposits into new high-yield investments that would earn them 3 percent per month. At first, they received the interest payments regularly from the two bank officers or from tellers. It was only later, when the payments stopped coming, that they learned that the scheme involved their supposed taking out of a "loan" against their own deposits, which Gregorio and Miranda then lent to an "anonymous" borrower. In most cases, this borrower was a former PNB client who could not have gotten a loan from the bank itself since he had a bad record. When he couldn't pay, the depositors' funds were seized by the bank to pay for the interest charges of their own "loans."

Retired advertising exec Ligaya Pasimio deposited her entire retirement money amounting to several millions of pesos and her daughter's dollar funds with the PNB. Thus, she was shocked when it dropped the "time-bomb": her deposits were applied to bank charges she "owed" the bank after her "loan" defaulted on payments. Perusing the bank documents later, Ligaya says the copies were mostly fraudulent, and her signatures, especially on the manager's checks, were forged "with such reckless abandon that a handwriting expert wouldn't be needed to repudiate them."

The victims were mostly conservative—if

We have not seen the end of terror

COMMENTARY

Ernesto M. Hilario

The war for the hearts and minds of the Muslims in Mindanao and elsewhere in the country rages, not in the battlefield, but in the communities where they live, often under conditions of economic hardship. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, if I'm not mistaken, is considered the poorest of the poor areas in the entire country because it has few schools, roads and other infrastructure, and scarce livelihood opportunities. While it may be true that poverty has bred armed rebellion, it may also be equally true that the long-festering secessionist movement has exacerbated the problem of poverty simply because no development can take place where armed conflict is an ever-present threat.

It is easy to say that the roots of terrorism lie in poverty and injustice. Whenever I hear someone from government say this, I instinctively squirm and cringe, because it means that the problem of terrorism will be with us for a very long time since poverty and injustice, as we all know, will be with us for a very long time. It is far better for government to say that it will send all terrorists to jail or make them meet their Creator posthaste, and mean it.

I am not saying that the government should abandon or postpone all plans to pursue the socio-economic development of Muslim Mindanao. In fact, it should accelerate the delivery of basic social services to strife-torn areas, such as Basilan and Sulu, as a key ingredient of a comprehensive program to address the problem of terrorism.

But beyond this, there is a need to carry a big stick and flush out the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf from their lairs.

Again, this is easier said than done. However,

the military and the police have enough resources to track down the Abu Sayyaf and to bring them to the bar of justice through good intelligence and relentless pursuit operations.

They can also prevent further terrorist activities through "target hardening," that is, securing potential targets so as to make them virtually impenetrable.

It is in the political aspect of counter-terrorism, however, where much more can be done. The government should use other political weapons in the war against terror. It could start by organizing a broad political movement within the local Muslim community that emphasizes peace and tolerance of other religious beliefs. This movement could spearhead a massive demonstration by Filipino Muslims in the streets of Manila condemning terrorism, whether of the Abu Sayyaf or al-Qaida variety. This could be part of a whole process of draining the pond that breeds terrorists.

Still another track is to accelerate the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. While there does not seem to be hard evidence of MILF support for the Abu Sayyaf, they are united by the same religious beliefs, and they pursue the same political agenda of self-rule. In other words, an MILF-Abu Sayyaf tactical alliance, while stoutly denied by the MILF, cannot be completely ruled out. A comprehensive peace agreement between the government and the MILF would serve to further drain the terrorist pond.

In the meantime, the police and the military should be ready to thwart any retaliatory attack by the Abu Sayyaf in the wake of the latter's decimation in the Battle of Bicutan. The government may have scored precious points that time, but the authorities should keep in mind that the Abu Sayyaf, like all terrorist groups, relies on the element of surprise, and strikes when we least expect it.

Ernesto Hilario is a freelance journalist.

A couple of laughs

SENSE AND
SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



"I. The greatest miracle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him."

"m. David was a Hebrew king who was skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in biblical times."

"n. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines."

"o. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta."

"p. When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger."

"q. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption."

"r. St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head."

"s. Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do unto others before they do one to you. He also explained, a man doth not live by sweat alone."

"t. It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance."

"u. The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels."

"v. The epistles were the wives of the apostles."

"w. One of the oppossums was St. Matthew who was also a taxman."

"x. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity, he preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage."

"y. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotony."

The next e-mail was sent by a friend in Australia who obviously agrees that mothers never change.

Columbus' mother: I don't care what you've

discovered, you still could have written!

Michelangelo's mother: Can't you paint on walls like other children? Do you have any idea how hard it is to get that stuff off the ceiling?

Napoleon's mother: All right, if you aren't hiding your report card inside your jacket, take your hand out of there and show me.

Abraham Lincoln's mother: Again with the stovepipe hat? Can't you just wear a baseball cap like the other kids?

Thomas Edison's mother: Of course, I'm proud that you invented the electric light bulb. Now turn it off and get to bed!

Albert Einstein's mother: But it's your senior picture. Can't you do something about your hair?

A lot of us who are technically challenged are going to identify with the following predicaments. It's nice to know "hindi tayo naglisa."

Helpdesk: What kind of computer do you have?

Female [sic] customer: A white one.

Helpdesk: Click on the "My computer" icon on the left of the screen.

Customer: Your left or my left?

Customer: Hi, this is Celine. I can't get my diskette out.

Helpdesk: Have you tried pushing the button?

Customer: Yes, sure, it's really stuck.

Helpdesk: That doesn't sound good; I'll make a note.

Customer: No ... wait a minute ... Oh, here it is!

It's still on my desk ... I haven't inserted it yet ... sorry

Helpdesk: Good day. How may I help you?

Male [sic] customer: Hello ... I can't print.

Helpdesk: Would you click on start for me and ...

Customer: Listen pal; don't start getting technical on me! I'm not Bill Gates damn it!

(And now enjoy your weekend. And Happy Easter!)

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

Cool pandas

EVERY year since I entered college, I write a diary entry or essay to commemorate the passing of another year in my life. This year, I'm writing it two days after my 21st birthday. It's not my way of glossing over the fact that I have put my childhood behind—but, yeah, it is something like that. I have just been a little too busy to try to put some order into my life.

You see, I'm a new graduate—actually, an almost grad. I have a thesis that I've been putting off writing and papers I have yet to turn in. Anyway, for the past month I've been training in a call center company. An easy job, or so I thought. But first, you have to get used to the working hours (the shift starts at 9 p.m. and ends at 6 a.m.). Then you have to get used to the people you talk to over the phone (some can be really nice and some can be really, well, some really ought to be censored). And then you have to fight off boredom (doing the same thing over and over again does not a great job make).

But the reason I stayed has nothing to do with the job, and everything to do with the people I work with. New Pandas we were called, and we were probably the noisiest, rowdiest trainees ever. After the first few days we were together, we already knew who were virgins and when the others lost their innocence (so to speak), who had piercings on various parts of the body, not counting the face, and who watched porn regularly. We took cigarette breaks together, and ate "lunch" in the cafeteria at two in the morning and dumped several sachets of instant coffee to survive the shift. After nine hours, we scampered off to our respective homes at 6 a.m., trying vainly to resist offers of breakfast-for-the-road-and-I'm-buying from the old-timers. Nobody winced whenever a burst of creative expletives would turn the air blue as one of us simply couldn't contain his or her emotions.

At the end of the day (which coincided with the start for people keeping normal hours), bad calls, bombing the first QA (quality analysis), and accidentally speaking in some garbled hybrid-English-Tagalog were forgotten. All we wanted to do was drop on our beds and return to our supposedly normal lives—only to rise up again as night fell to begin our part of the rat race.

I'll miss those guys. The "eleventacles" (did I get the number right?), our Bona kids, my patient TC, "John," "Josh," "Sinead," "Dao Ming Sz," the mommies and, of course, my cheesecake buddies. They were the main reason I stayed and they are the main reason I find it hard to leave. I may not have gotten some rich materials for my annual gripes about turning a year older, but I did meet the coolest pandas I'll ever encounter and that was a wonderful, great, "splending" thing indeed.

When I was job-hunting, I had enough experiences to write an essay about getting lost. Back then, it used to be such an adventure for me—getting lost. It was as if I was exploring uncharted territory. I wasn't irritated easily. I thought it funny every time I went around a block without finding the tallest building there. I was even secretly proud of the fact that while some people had a lousy sense of direction, I had none at all.

Maybe it's part of this annoying thing called growing up, but I don't find it amusing anymore to get lost. Especially not in a place where I've stayed for the better part of five years. I get irritated at the slightest delay and I have become pragmatic about being late, just telling myself if they forgive me, great; if they toss me out, it's not meant to be.

I didn't even notice that change of attitude until I came across my unfinished and unedited essay about the art of getting lost. And it sort of saddened me that I was growing older, but not growing up. I don't want to be the kind of adult kids shun. I don't want to be surly and boring and ... so stereotypically adult.

After reading that article, I wanted to be her again. I wanted to be the person who thought that getting lost was an art. Because that person had a sense of humor. That person had fun. That person had a life.

I know that I cannot stave off growing older. It's inevitable. It's the growing up thing that I'm having some trouble with. I know that it entails taking responsibility. Actually, that's all I can remember about growing up. I'm sure there are others, but I know it doesn't mean losing one's sense of humor or being a Scrooge the whole year round.

Now, if only I can discover the art of getting to a place on time...

Maria Kristina M. Virtucio, 22, is a sales and service consultant in a call center and part-time student at the University of the Philippines Diliman. This was written two years ago when she was trying to decide whether to stay or leave. She has since finished her thesis.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

THEY SAID

Idle talk

"Education is in disarray but no one is solving it. We are not focused. We keep on talking about the problem but we don't do anything about them."

—Sen. Richard Gordon on his proposal to text text messages with proceeds going straight to an education fund

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Justice for PNB victims

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



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rather naïve—senior citizens who guarded their retirement funds zealously but also wanted to earn more. But precisely because they are conservative, it's unthinkable that they would gamble their lifetime savings to take out a loan against their own savings in order to lend to "anonymous" borrowers.

Take Virginia Pollard, who first exposed the fraud pulled by Gregorio and Miranda to the PNB head office, which led to their investigation and dismissal. Pollard, a housewife, had built up sizable dollar as well as peso accounts. In 2000, the two officials enticed her to entrust her money to them, promising a minimum earning of 3 percent per month. Pollard was able to partially recover her dollar deposit, but her peso deposit has not been returned nearly five years later.

Dr. Antonio Mota was a doctor in the Negros Occidental Provincial Hospital until he retired, while his wife Elvira was a pharmacist who gave up her profession to take care of their family. As their daughter Elvira Mota Rodriguez, who's now fighting for them, put it, her parents never used a credit card because they did not want to have any "utang." Like many older folks, they believed in spending wisely and keeping money in the bank for a rainy date. They chose the PNB because they thought it was a good bank. In May 2000, Gregorio and Miranda convinced Mrs. Mota that her time deposit would earn a "special rate" because of her VIP status with the bank. But when someone from the bank called her up to remind her of her "loan," she was shocked and she began to worry about it.

With daughter Elvira, Mrs. Mota met with new Sucat manager, Lani Balaquía, who showed them the bank's copy of her "loan" documents. Mota denied she ever got a loan, and Balaquía told her to clear it up with Gregorio and Miranda. When confronted, the two women didn't mention the word "loan" at all, but explained that "in short, *inutang mo ang pera mo.*" Later they returned the dollar funds to the Motas, but the combined peso accounts of many millions was never returned.

The extreme anxiety over the status of her family's funds caused Mota to fall ill. In June 2003 she died, insisting to the end that she did not have any loan from the PNB. Dr. Mota followed her to the grave soon after. Elvira, in a meeting with PNB senior vice president Ricardo Gonda, was told that the time deposits of her parents are covered by a hold-out in favor of PNB. "How can I find justice for my parents who thought their money was in a placement similar to a time deposit product of the bank? How can I find justice for their untimely death?" she asks.

The case of Francis and Heriberta Ferrer is just as pathetic. Francis worked in Saudi Arabia for nearly 20 years as an electrician handling the noisy boiler machines, so that he came home with his hearing somewhat impaired. Heriberta is a public school teacher and they have several children, the youngest only 12 years old. The Ferrers deposited P1 million in PNB Sucat, hoping this would see their children through school. In December 2000, however, Gregorio and Miranda sweet-talked Heriberta to invest their money in a "special investment" that would yield 3 percent every month. Interest was paid to them from October 2001 to November 2002, after which payment stopped completely. In August 2003, the Sucat schemers sent them a stale check from another person as payment, which predictably bounced. The Ferrers' deposit was seized by the bank as "hold-out loan," but Francis complains that it has refused to show them the check allegedly received by his wife as "loan," and that his signature was never obtained, contrary to law.

(Monday: The view from the PNB)

Cool pandas

EVERY year since I entered college, I write a diary entry or essay to commemorate the passing of another year in my life. This year, I'm writing it two days after my 21st birthday. It's not my way of glossing over the fact that I have put my childhood behind—but, yeah, it is something like that. I have just been a little too busy to try to put some order into my life.

You see, I'm a new graduate—actually, an almost grad. I have a thesis that I've been putting off writing and papers I have yet to turn in. Anyway, for the past month I've been training in a call center company. An easy job, or so I thought. But first, you have to get used to the working hours (the shift starts at 9 p.m. and ends at 6 a.m.). Then you have to get used to the people you talk to over the phone (some can be really nice and some can be really, well, some really ought to be censored). And then you have to fight off boredom (doing the same thing over and over again does not a great job make).

But the reason I stayed has nothing to do with the job, and everything to do with the people I work with. New Pandas we were called, and we were probably the noisiest, rowdiest trainees ever. After the first few days we were together, we already knew who were virgins and when the others lost their innocence (so to speak), who had piercings on various parts of the body, not counting the face, and who watched porn regularly. We took cigarette breaks together, and ate "lunch" in the cafeteria at two in the morning and dumped several sachets of instant coffee to survive the shift. After nine hours, we scammed off to our respective homes at 6 a.m., trying vainly to resist offers of breakfast-for-the-road-and-I'm-buying from the old-timers. Nobody winced whenever a burst of creative expletives would turn the air blue as one of us simply couldn't contain his or her emotions.

At the end of the day (which coincided with the start for people keeping normal hours), bad calls, bombing the first QA (quality analysis), and accidentally speaking in some garbled hybrid-English-Tagalog were forgotten. All we wanted to do was drop on our beds and return to our supposedly normal lives—only to rise up again as night fell to begin our part of the rat race.

I'll miss those guys. The "eleventacles" (did I get the number right?), our Bona kids, my patient TC, "John," "Josh," "Sinead," "Dao Ming Sz," the mommies and, of course, my cheesecake buddies. They were the main reason I stayed and they are the main reason I find it hard to leave. I may not have gotten some rich materials for my annual gripes about turning a year older, but I did meet the coolest pandas I'll ever encounter and that was a wonderful, great, "splending" thing indeed.

Smelling street signs

WHEN I was job-hunting, I had enough experiences to write an essay about getting lost. Back then, it used to be such an adventure for me—getting lost. It was as if I was exploring uncharted territory. I wasn't irritated easily. I thought it funny every time I went around a block without finding the tallest building there. I was even secretly proud of the fact that while some people had a lousy sense of direction, I had none at all.

Maybe it's part of this annoying thing called growing up, but I don't find it amusing anymore to get lost. Especially not in a place where I've stayed for the better part of five years. I get irritated at the slightest delay and I have become pragmatic about being late, just telling myself if they forgive me, great; if they toss me out, it's not meant to be.

I didn't even notice that change of attitude until I came across my unfinished and unedited essay about the art of getting lost. And it sort of saddened me that I was growing older, but not growing up. I don't want to be the kind of adult kids shun. I don't want to be surly and boring and ... so stereotypically adult.

After reading that article, I wanted to be her again. I wanted to be the person who thought that getting lost was an art. Because that person had a sense of humor. That person had fun. That person had a life.

I know that I cannot stave off growing older. It's inevitable. It's the growing up thing that I'm having some trouble with. I know that it entails taking responsibility. Actually, that's all I can remember about growing up. I'm sure there are others, but I know it doesn't mean losing one's sense of humor or being a Scrooge the whole year round.

Now, if only I can discover the art of getting to a place on time...

Maria Kristina M. Virtucio, 22, is a sales and service consultant in a call center and part-time student at the University of the Philippines Diliman. This was written two years ago when she was trying to decide whether to stay or leave. She has since finished her thesis.

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THEY SAID

Idle talk

"Education is in disarray but no one is solving it. We are not focused. We keep on talking about the problem but we don't do anything about them."

—Sen. Richard Gordon on his proposal to tax text messages with proceeds going straight to an education fund

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We have not seen the end of terror

COMMENTARY

Ernesto M. Hilario

SOME time back, TV news showed footage of a rally in a state university in Mindanao by students protesting the appointment of a new president. While the students barricaded the gates of the campus, voices could be heard in the background repeatedly chanting, "Allahu Akbar! (God is great!)"

What I found worrisome was not only that these students would lend a religious color to an otherwise secular issue, but that I had heard the same lusty chant of "Allahu Akbar!" not too long ago on another TV news footage showing an angry crowd of Iraqis as they surrounded a burning vehicle and repeatedly stomped on the charred bodies of four American civilian security contractors.

While the circumstances in the two incidents may be quite different, this fusion of religion and politics makes for a volatile mix. Some analysts speak of a global Islamic revolution after 9/11, and the Philippines has not been spared from the contagion, with the Superferry 14 bombing, the Valentine's Day bombings and the recent Camp Bagong Diwa prison revolt by the Abu Sayyaf. We are standing on Ground Zero, at least in Southeast Asia, of this global Islamic revolution, and the sooner government realizes this, the better for all of us.

What should concern us now is the possibility that the armed conflict in Mindanao that has simmered since the 1970s may have engendered a new generation of Islamic radicals who identify with the terrorist methods of the Abu Sayyaf, and by extension, the international terrorist network of al-Qaida headed by Osama bin Laden, and therefore could be potential recruits for deadly terrorist attacks in the country in the future.

If there's anything that the Bicutan siege may be telling us, it is that the problem of terrorism is bound to get worse, not better. Bicutan may be one battle where the Abu Sayyaf lost a few of its leaders, but it could be a pyrrhic victory for the government, because the war against terrorism is far from over.

The war for the hearts and minds of the Muslims in Mindanao and elsewhere in the country rages, not in the battlefield, but in the communities where they live, often under conditions of economic hardship. The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, if I'm not mistaken, is considered the poorest of the poor areas in the entire country because it has few schools, roads and other infrastructure, and scarce livelihood opportunities. While it may be true that poverty has bred armed rebellion, it may also be equally true that the long-festering secessionist movement has exacerbated the problem of poverty simply because no development can take place where armed conflict is an ever-present threat.

It is easy to say that the roots of terrorism lie in poverty and injustice. Whenever I hear someone from government say this, I instinctively squirm and cringe, because it means that the problem of terrorism will be with us for a very long time since poverty and injustice, as we all know, will be with us for a very long time. It is far better for government to say that it will send all terrorists to jail or make them meet their Creator posthaste, and mean it.

I am not saying that the government should abandon or postpone all plans to pursue the socio-economic development of Muslim Mindanao. In fact, it should accelerate the delivery of basic social services to strife-torn areas, such as Basilan and Sulu, as a key ingredient of a comprehensive program to address the problem of terrorism.

But beyond this, there is a need to carry a big stick and flush out the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf from their lairs.

Again, this is easier said than done. However,

the military and the police have enough resources to track down the Abu Sayyaf and to bring them to the bar of justice through good intelligence and relentless pursuit operations.

They can also prevent further terrorist activities through "target hardening," that is, securing potential targets so as to make them virtually impenetrable.

It is in the political aspect of counter-terrorism, however, where much more can be done. The government should use other political weapons in the war against terror. It could start by organizing a broad political movement within the local Muslim community that emphasizes peace and tolerance of other religious beliefs. This movement could spearhead a massive demonstration by Filipino Muslims in the streets of Manila condemning terrorism, whether of the Abu Sayyaf or al-Qaida variety. This could be part of a whole process of draining the pond that breeds terrorists.

Still another track is to accelerate the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. While there does not seem to be hard evidence of MILF support for the Abu Sayyaf, they are united by the same religious beliefs, and they pursue the same political agenda of self-rule. In other words, an MILF-Abu Sayyaf tactical alliance, while stoutly denied by the MILF, cannot be completely ruled out. A comprehensive peace agreement between the government and the MILF would serve to further drain the terrorist pond.

In the meantime, the police and the military should be ready to thwart any retaliatory attack by the Abu Sayyaf in the wake of the latter's declaration in the Battle of Bicutan. The government may have scored precious points that time, but the authorities should keep in mind that the Abu Sayyaf, like all terrorist groups, relies on the element of surprise, and strikes when we least expect it.

Ernesto Hilario is a freelance journalist.

A couple of laughs

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



"I. The greatest miracle in the bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him.

"m. David was a Hebrew king who was skilled at playing the liar. He fought the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in biblical times.

"n. Solomon, one of Davids sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

"o. When Mary heard she was the mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta.

"p. When the three wise guys from the east side arrived, they found Jesus in the manager.

"q. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraception.

"r. St. John the blacksmith dumped water on his head.

"s. Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do unto others before they do one to you. He also explained, a man doth not live by sweat alone.

"t. It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tombstone off the entrance.

"u. The people who followed the lord were called the 12 decibels.

"v. The epistles were the wives of the apostals.

"w. One of the opposums was St. Matthew who was also a taximan.

"x. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity, he preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage.

"y. Christians have only one spouse. This is called monotomy.

The next e-mail was sent by a friend in Australia who obviously agrees that mothers never change.

Columbus' mother: I don't care what you've

discovered, you still could have written!

Michelangelo's mother: Can't you paint on walls like other children? Do you have any idea how hard it is to get that stuff off the ceiling?

Napoleon's mother: All right, if you aren't hiding your report card inside your jacket, take your hand out of there and show me.

Abraham Lincoln's mother: Again with the stovepipe hat? Can't you just wear a baseball cap like the other kids?

Thomas Edison's mother: Of course, I'm proud that you invented the electric light bulb. Now turn it off and get to bed!

Albert Einstein's mother: But it's your senior picture. Can't you do something about your hair?

A lot of us who are technically challenged are going to identify with the following predicaments. It's nice to know "hindi tayo naglisa."

Helpdesk: What kind of computer do you have?

Female [sic] customer: A white one.

Helpdesk: Click on the "My computer" icon on the left of the screen.

Customer: Your left or my left?

Customer: Hi, this is Celine. I can't get my diskette out.

Helpdesk: Have you tried pushing the button?

Customer: Yes, sure, it's really stuck.

Helpdesk: That doesn't sound good; I'll make a note.

Customer: No ... wait a minute... Oh, here it is! It's still on my desk... I haven't inserted it yet... sorry

Helpdesk: Good day. How may I help you?

Male [sic] customer: Hello... I can't print.

Helpdesk: Would you click on start for me and...

Customer: Listen pal; don't start getting technical on me! I'm not Bill Gates damn it!

(And now enjoy your weekend. And Happy Easter!)

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

House Bill 3773's basic flaw

I FULLY agree with the INQUIRER March 8 editorial on House Bill 3773 which seeks to regulate issues involving reproductive health and population management.

As a man of the cloth, I will speak about this matter from the moral or ethical view point. The Church only wants to promote the well-being, fulfillment and happiness of each person. So does the State. The Church helps the person attain his good by giving him the means to form his conscience so that he can act ethically: this she does by her preaching and services. The State helps attain the good of the person by enacting laws that put order in society and by enforcing those laws.

Now, state laws can truly attain the good of the person if these laws conform to the natural moral law, which transcends person and state, because this is the law inscribed by the Creator in the human person, in his mind and heart. Any normal person who uses his reason uprightly will recognize this law in himself.

What the Church is trying to say is

that House Bill 3773 will not obtain the good of the person because there is a provision there that does not conform to the natural moral law: this is the promotion of the use of contraceptives in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies. The Church has always taught that using artificial contraceptives to prevent pregnancy is against the natural moral law.

Many people argue that such a position is incoherent because there is no difference, as far as results are concerned, between couples using artificial contraceptives and couples who practice natural methods (periodic continence): both result in no conception. So, why is the former case immoral and the latter not?

I have asked married couples that question: what difference do you see if you use artificial contraceptives and if you practice natural methods? They always answer the same thing: natural methods require self-control, continence. So that's the difference and that's the point. Using artificial contraceptives does not promote chastity,

the virtue that enables man and woman to use reason and will to control the sexual urge. The good of the person demands that he is able to make reason prevail over impulse. A person can become a slave to his drives by allowing himself to be carried away by them. We realize that society will benefit from its members if they practice chastity. We can see that it is the lack of chastity that is at the root of marital infidelities, broken families, broken lives, crimes and many other disorders in society.

Yes, House Bill 3773 has good aims: to prevent abortions because of unwanted pregnancies. But the means to achieve that end must be morally sound; promoting the use of artificial contraceptives is not a sound way.

—FR. CECILIO L. MAGSINO,
chaplain, Southridge School,
Alabang, Muntinlupa City



'Sad' argument

THIS refers to the published full-page manifesto of my *compadre*, Arthur "Chuck" Medel, which appeared in the March issue of the INQUIRER. Late last year, Raquel Ching and I met for the first time. We have not talked since I got involved in the International School case. Since Chuck has gone public, I would like to be heard on my own.

The argument that one should not complain because he is better off where he is than he would be otherwise is unpersuasive. Long ago, that classic argument was used for oppression, when Filipinos wanted to have jobs in the US military—better than shining shoes for the top brass. We now have two well-known generals in the US Army because, like other weak minorities, it was realized that—like what Frederick Douglass said of the struggle of the blacks—you cannot have the ocean without the roar of its many waters. The idea that Raquel cannot ask for more because local public school teachers get low pay is sad. It can be used by predatory mining companies that are now coming in—that local staff should not complain because they would otherwise be jobless or settle for very

poor pay, in a country with no pride and dignity, and with low standards and expectations.

In short, we struggle with serious policy questions here. If Chuck, for whom I have great respect and fondness as a reasonable, decent, caring person, had never left us and stayed with us all this time, he might see it from our perspective and appreciate our *cri de coeur* (passionate outcry). My own personal beef is with the reported arrogance of the IS head, who has supposedly continued to treat the natives as if we were in some last plantation. I am reminded of the red-neck Deep South and *kawawa* military bases debates when *mejor que nada* gave way to *nada es mejor*. On the broader issues, other lawyers are involved. But, now that the issue of lawyers has come out, we should look at the record of each and every lawyer who has been involved in this case, including myself, if only because Chuck's final sentence slurs the "pressure-able" Supreme Court. If any justice has been approached, he should speak out.

—RAV SAGUISAG,

4045 Bigasan, St., Palanan, Makati City

Life-and-death matter also for the investors

MAY I update your readers on the mining issues raised in Fr. John J. Carroll's commentary, "Clutching at golden straws." (PDI, 3/2/05) I absolutely agree with him that resolving the remaining Placer Dome/Marcopper problems in Marinduque presents an opportunity for the Arroyo administration to demonstrate political will if it is to convince more Filipinos of its readiness to face the consequences of its more aggressive mining policy.

However, with the Supreme Court decision allowing foreign-owned corporations to manage and control mining operations under the Technical or Financial Assistance Agreement (FTAA), it is most important to temper this economic strategy with legislation to protect the environment, ecology and health of potential mining communities. This will defend us from the kind of hardball—as Father Carroll wrote—that these mining companies could play once established in the those communities. Learning from the painful lessons of the Marcopper tragedy, I filed three bills to address the most critical concerns on health and environment, compensation for damages and escaping liability.

If these bills become law, I believe our government will be in a stronger position to deal with hardball playing corporations. The message we should send to potential investors is that their money cannot be given the same value as the lives of Filipinos that are at stake in the mining areas. Since it is a matter of life and death for the people who live in these areas, it should be the same for the investors as well.

Striking a balance between preserving our environment, protecting our people and promoting development is never an easy task. In life, there are always different options for people to choose from. But the least we can do is to make sure that Filipinos are not left carrying the empty bag. There will never be any perfect system for mining and exploiting our natural resources.

The best that we can hope for is that we have a set of rules and regulations that will make any investor feel that they are in the same boat as the residents of the mineral land. Instead of just having Filipinos clutching at golden straws, the transient investors must be made to conduct themselves as if their very "lives" depended on the continued well-being of both the environment and health of the community.

—REB EDMUNDO O. REYES,

Lone District of Marinduque,
House of Representatives, Quezon City

The real terrorists

THE PROPOSAL of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, articulated by Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan, to criminalize the time-honored journalistic practice of interviewing revolutionary personalities and organizations (or those whom the military have routinely referred to as "known terrorists"), under an "anti-terrorism law" is plain crass.

Such a suggestion mirrors the mechanical thinking of the military establishment. We wonder how the AFP could have conjured such a proposal.

The proposal is in itself fraught with terror. It causes a chilling effect on journalists who, in their daily pursuit of the truth, continue to uphold integrity, objectivity and fair play by soliciting the views of all parties concerned as much as humanly possible. It is bad enough that through sheer availability of machinery and resources, news reports already favor the government and the military. Does the AFP and Malacañang intend to monopolize opinion and rub out what remains of democratic space to benefit their propaganda war?

Perhaps it would be best for Adan and his ilk to first focus on ridding their house of scoundrels and corrupt officials who sell the guns and bombs that are now killing our servicemen in the field. Those misfits are the real terrorists.

—EDMUNDO BACATAN,

153 Scout Rallos St., Kamuning, Quezon City

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Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Atis losing land to solon, board member

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Ati families on Boracay Island, believed to be the original inhabitants of the island, fear eviction after caretakers of the land they occupy erected barbed wire fences that have divided the community.

Sr. Victoria Ustan, of the Holy Rosary Parish Ati Mission (HRPAM), said in a telephone interview that caretakers of the property owned by the family of Aniceto Yap, brother of provincial board member Jose Yap, put up the fence early this week.

She said construction of the barbed wire fence, around an ad-

jacent lot owned by the family of Aklan Rep. Florencio Miraflores, was ongoing as of yesterday. The construction was being supervised by the property's caretaker, Nathaniel Sacapaño.

Ustan said the fencing has separated 15 houses of Ati families and the house that the nuns occupy in the Miraflores property

from around 20 other Ati houses sitting on Yap's lot.

"We had to make a way in order to pass through by stretching the wires," said Ustan.

The construction of the fences was confirmed by lawyer Arnulfo Francisco, regional legal officer of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) covering Western and Eastern Visayas.

"It is the same as evicting them," Francisco, who was in the Ati community recently, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Miraflores said he was unaware of the construction of the fences but he admitted that there

is a long-standing request from his family for the HRPAM and the Atis to vacate their property.

He clarified that he is only a "minor owner" of the property. He, however, refused to further discuss the issue, saying that because he is a government official, his statements "have been misunderstood." He did not elaborate.

Francisco said the fences have restricted the movement of the Atis in the community.

The Ati community occupies a one-hectare area in Sitio Bolabog in Barangay Balabag, one of three villages of Boracay at the opposite side of the white beach.

There are at least 33 families and around 150 Atis now living in Bolabog. The homes of around 10 families and the HRPAM house sit on the lot owned by the Miraflores family while the rest of the families occupy part of the land owned by the Yaps.

The Yap and Miraflores families have claimed ownership of the land but the Atis claim that they are the original inhabitants of the island.

The claim has been supported by documentation conducted by the nuns of the HRPAM and government agencies.

There is a pending application for a Certificate of Ancestral Do-

main Title (CADT) filed on Feb. 23, 2000 before the NCIP to prevent their ejection from the land.

NCIP chair Reuben Dasay Lingating wrote a letter to Representative Miraflores on Feb. 16, urging him to respect the rights of the indigenous group and not evict the Atis.

But Ustan said Sacapaño, the caretaker of the Miraflores property, told the Atis that they were putting up the fence because they refused to leave.

"It's clear that their intention is to pressure the Atis (to leave)," she said.

"Please help us, the Atis have nowhere to go if they are driven out," Ustan appealed.

PTA gives city supervision of Hundred Islands'

ALAMINOS CITY—After 64 years under the supervision of the Philippine Tourism Authority, the Hundred Islands National Park here will now be managed by the city government.

Mayor Hernani Braganza yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement with PTA general manager Robert Dean Barbers and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor transferring the management of the 1,844-hectare national park to the city government.

Braganza said the transfer will give Alaminos residents an opportunity to harness the tourism and economic potential of the national park, considered as the jewel of Pangasinan tourism.

He said the transfer would promote a "sense of ownership" among residents who have been "alienated" for so long from the Hundred Islands.

Opportunities

The city government is banking on the business and employment opportunities from the development of the cluster of islands.

Defensor has promised to allocate P3 million from his agency to help the city government start with the development of the national park.

Defensor said the national park is among the 35 eco-tourism spots in the country that the government is promoting. He said the transfer of management of the national park is also part of the government efforts to develop other tourist spots in the country.

"Lagi na lang Boracay ang nafa-focus (The attention is always on Boracay)," Defensor said.

Braganza said due to the city's aggressive promotion of the Hundred Islands, the influx of foreign and local tourists in the city has increased by 92 percent during the July to December 2004 period as compared to the same period in 2003.

Timing

The turnover was timed with the week-long fiesta celebration of the city and came as a fitting present to local officials and residents.

The city government is allocating P6 million as an initial investment for its tourism campaign anchored on the Hundred Islands, Braganza said.

The PTA is also planning to build an Olympic-size swimming pool at Lucap Point in Barangay Lucap to jumpstart the development of facilities at the Hundred Islands. Eric Montoya, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Mayor indicted for radioman's slay

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Aklan provincial prosecutor's office has indicted Mayor Fred Arcenio of Lezo, Aklan in last year's killing of broadcaster Herson "Boy" Hinolan.

In a 10-page resolution dated March 3 but released on March 15, assistant provincial prosecutor Apolinario Barrios said there was probable cause to charge Arcenio and an unidentified person for homicide.

Barrios junked Arcenio's alibi that he was in Lezo town when Hinolan was gunned down in the capital town of Kalibo, around 10 km away.

He said Arcenio's alibi "cannot prevail over the positive identification (of the mayor as the gunman by a witness)."

Barrios said the mayor failed to prove that it was physically impossible for him to be at the crime scene during the shooting. The prosecutor pointed out that Lezo is only a 30-minute drive from Kalibo.

Reached for comment, Arcenio said he had yet to receive a copy of the resolution but he maintained he did not kill Hinolan.

"I'm disappointed because I have nothing to do with Boy's killing. We are both victims here," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Arcenio said he also wants justice like Hinolan's family. He will consult his lawyer on his next moves. The police earlier filed a murder charge

against two suspects, including Arcenio after a witness, Peter Melgar, identified the mayor as the alleged gunman who repeatedly shot Hinolan near a carnival in Kalibo on Nov. 13.

The 38-year-old broadcaster died two days after the shooting from serious injuries that damaged his stomach and liver.

He was station manager of dyIN Bombo Radyo in Kalibo and hosted the station's morning program "Bombohanay Bigtime."

In his seven-page counter-affidavit filed on Jan. 14, Arcenio called the accusation "baseless and concocted."

He said Melgar's statement was "incredible" and contradicted the testimony of other prosecution witnesses.

He said he was in Lezo during the time of the shooting. He supported his claim by submitting affidavits of seven witnesses along with his counter-affidavit.

Barrios said there was no evidence that the shooting was premeditated because Melgar only saw the actual shooting but not the preceding events.

But Hinolan's widow Aphrodite said Arcenio should be charged with murder.

"I feel bad because my husband was shot in the back while urinating," she said in a telephone interview. "(Homicide) is too light for him."

A former Master Sergeant in the Army under the 47th Infantry Battalion, Arcenio won as town councilor in 2001.



FIESTA GUARD
A soldier keeps a watchful eye on street performers during the holding of the 68th Araw ng Dabaw on March 16 amid terrorist threats.

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Army asked to present detainee

MOLAVE, Zamboanga del Sur—Human rights activists joined the family of an arrested communist leader in Western Mindanao in demanding her whereabouts and condition.

Pol Busiña, elder brother of alleged communist rebel leader Angelina Ipong, said the military has been refusing to release information regarding his sister.

Busiña, accompanied by a lawyer, local religious personalities and members of the human rights group Karapatan, went twice to the head-

quarters of the Army's 1st Infantry Division in Labangan town supposedly to inquire on Ipong's condition and whereabouts but they failed.

Busiña said because of the military's refusal to provide details on his sister's condition, he would file a petition for the issuance of a writ of habeas corpus.

"We only saw her in a newspaper photo showing her blindfolded and guided by two escorts," Jenah Belza, Karapatan deputy secretary general for Western Mindanao, said. Ryan Rosaura, PDI Mindanao Bureau



ECOLOGY
Cavite Eco-Aldes render "maliksing serbisyo (swift service)" at the Caylabne Bay Resort in a continuing campaign to clean the resort's shores of garbage, collecting the wastes under the heat of the sun.

WARRIORS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

(Reinsurance for NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY'S Directors & Officers Liability Cover)

The GSIS-GIBAC, thru its Technical Working Group (TWG) is inviting qualified local and foreign reinsurance companies / brokers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the reinsurance for the National Development Company's Directors and Officers Liability cover for the period 12:00 noon of April 8, 2005 to 12:00 noon of April 9, 2006, with an approved budget of P7,200,000.00, all inclusive.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Issuance of Eligibility & Bidding Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Submission & Opening of Eligibility & Bid Envelopes
March 14 to 18, 2005 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Secretariat OSVP-GIG, 6th Floor, GSIS Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	March 21, 2005 2:00 PM Makati Skyline Restaurant 8th Floor, GSIS Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	April 4, 2005 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Makati Skyline Restaurant 8th Floor, GSIS Bldg., Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

For applicant-foreign reinsurance and applicant-brokers with foreign lead reinsurance, the foreign reinsurance must have a credit rating of at least "A" from a reputable rating agency as of December 2004, and certify that it will provide a lead line of at least 25% of the reinsured risk.

Eligibility & bid documents shall be issued to applicants upon filing of a Letter of Intent to Apply and payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of P4,500.00 to the Government Service Insurance System.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, sufficiency of Bid Security, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.

The GSIS and the TWG reserve the right to reject any and all bids or Letters of Intent, waive any defect therein and accept the offer which it deems responsive and most advantageous to the government.

March 8, 2005, Pasay City, Philippines.

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GSI-Kalati Sam, Kalati Kalati Alakalaka

ENRIQUETA P. DISUANCO
GIBAC Chairman
March 12, 18, 2005.

83-year-old water tower gives dilemma to San Fernando folk

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A water tank is a water tank.

But when it is 83 years old, one of the few remaining American colonial structures in this Pampanga capital and leaning like Italy's Tower of Pisa, what would you do with it?

The city tourism council wanted the structure preserved but the City of San Fernando Water District (CSFWD) and the village council of Barangay Lourdes wanted it demolished.

On Thursday, the city council has stepped into the row when it began the first of three public consultations on the fate of what engineers here call "elevated, concrete water tank."

Used to be filled with 100,000 gallons, the tank signaled greater access to potable water. Through a system of pipes, water was delivered to homes and ended the reliance of many families on deep wells.

It was the first structure to supply water in that extent to this 251-year-old city, according to Jorge Gumba, CSFWD general manager.

Formerly managed by the defunct National Water and Sewerage Administration, the tank was decommissioned 10 years ago. Gumba said that was done on the recommendation of a British engineering consultant who found the structure unsafe.

Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991 and the lahars flows in the aftermath of the disaster

buried the tank's base by less than 10 feet. The tank originally stood at 100 feet.

Today, it tilts several degrees southeast, to the direction of the San Fernando Elementary School. The tank stands on a 2,000-square meter lot behind the school.

Gumba said its demolition was long due but was delayed by the rehabilitation of smaller alternative tanks and installation of new pipes.

Last week, however, the barangay council of Lourdes passed a resolution asking the city council to destroy the tank.

Village chief Osmundo Trinidad said it posed threat to students in the school compound.

The village council, Trinidad said, also plans to build a barangay hall, a day care center and a multi-purpose court on the same lot.

But that would depend on the CSFWD's decision whether to lend the village some land for public use.

The CSFWD board of directors on Wednesday agreed to defer the demolition.

But the board, according to Gumba, did not want to take liability for any accident that may result from the preservation of the tank.

Gray and some parts moss-covered, it juts out in San Fernando's landscape now dominated by advertising neon signs.

Fernando Santos, chief of the city's tourism office, said the tourism council recognizes the issue of public safety and the need for public lands.

But conservation efforts, he said, need not be pitted against social needs.



THE WATER tower circa 1921.

Jinggoy seeks free access to dad in jail

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Sen. Jingoy Estrada yesterday appealed to the government's "sense of compassion" to allow them free access to his father, deposed President Joseph Estrada, who is being detained in Tanay.

Estrada made the appeal while delivering his keynote speech to members of the League of the Municipalities in the Philippines-Cebu province chapter yesterday afternoon.

The senator, a former LMP national president, was the invited guest of the league's local chapter general assembly.

Estrada said he would not want a repeat of last Tuesday's incident when he and mother, Sen. Loi Ejercito-Estrada, were prevented from visiting the former president, who is being held on plunder charges.

He said they were told that they could not see him because there were terrorists who were planning to get into the former president's detention center. But "di ako naniniwala dyan (I don't believe that)," he said.

The senator later clarified in an ambush interview that the family has been already allowed to visit the elder Estrada after delivering a privilege speech in the Senate last Wednesday.

He said he was grateful to newly appointed Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lumibao who immediately called him late Wednesday and informed him that the immediate family is permitted to visit the jailed president.

The younger Estrada said he was informed about the intelligence reports gathered by the police that "some terrorists might attack or enter the premises of Tanay," the supposed reason that prevented the immediate family from visiting the elder Estrada.

He said the prohibition was a "total violation of the law" as all detention prisoners are allowed by law to be visited by their immediate families, even by priests.

Estrada also criticized the Arroyo administration for making his father a "scapegoat" for the problems faced by the country.

He said the problem of graft and corruption has remained unsolved since President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed office.

However, when asked by one of the mayors here, Compostela Mayor Antonio Dangoy, whether the Estrada camp is open to reconciliation, the senator answered in positive.

But he clarified that reconciliation must be initiated by Arroyo's camp.

Consumer leader seeks sober dialogue over NLE

A LEADER of a consumer organization called on all sectors "to avoid extremist measures and find a common ground for the human and industrial development of Pampanga and the entire Central Luzon," as these initiatives relate to mixed reactions to the new

North Luzon Expressway (NLE).

Nina Lapid Sapala, founding member of Sulong sa Ikauunlad ng Gitnang Luzon Aksyon Nal (Sigla!), made this statement in the wake of protests staged by some sectors against the NLE, underscoring the need to "concentrate on things that unite, not divide, us."

Sapala, also a member of the Regional Development Council (RDC), in a press statement declared her group's support for the new expressway, and invited others to a dialogue "so that we can

open our eyes."

She said only last July 2004, she led the RDC, which she then co-chaired, in opposing the NLE and its planned toll fees.

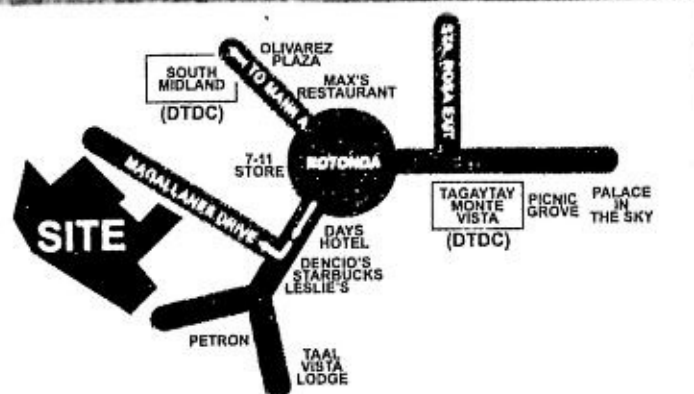
"After a series of consultations... we realize that we are better off working with them..." she said.

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Question of the Week

What do you think should be done to the vendors in Bohol who sold the cassava snacks that resulted in the deaths and poisoning of young school kids?

Senders of the best 20 texts as published in Tuesday's InoBox will each receive an "Inquirer Mug!"

inquirer box
name/age/city/message.

(Maximum of 160 characters)

*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.

Provincial winners can text:

Inquirer ad name/city/mailling address

to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them.

INQUIRER *Visayas*

Squadron guards the Visayan Sea

By Connie E. Fernandez
Bantayan Island

GAUDENCIO Peña may be 80 years old but this "old sea dog" is far from retirement. In fact, fire burns in his belly as he looks forward to sail, this time as a volunteer of the Visayan Sea Squadron (VSS).

Peña, or Manong Dodong to his friends, is one of about 200 people, including government officials and fisherfolk, who signed up for the squadron on a long-term task to "conserve, protect and restore" the wealth of the sea.

"I love the sea. I have been a diving instructor for 50 years and I saw how beautiful the sea was. But over the years, I have also seen how it has deteriorated," said Manong Dodong, a former pilot and air traffic controller. He said he wanted to do his share to restore and protect the sea for his five children and eight grandchildren.

The Visayan Sea, comprising about one million hectares, is the heart of the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Triangle, bounded by Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Considered the richest marine eco-region in the world, covering the Visayan provinces of Iloilo, Cebu, Negros Occidental and Masbate, it was once dubbed the "Alaska of the Philippines" because it contained an array of fish species and corals, more than the entire Caribbean Sea.

Like anything in abundance, the Visayan Sea has been abused. Destructive fishing methods, such as the use of explosives and cyanide, and over-fishing have taken their toll on Visayan Sea. Ninety-five percent of marine life and 99 percent of corals have been lost as a result.

With the Visayan Sea on the verge of collapse, something has to be done fast.

Concept

In May 2003, then Negros Occidental Rep. Alfredo Marañon raised the idea of patrolling the Visayan Sea to protect it from illegal fishers to environmentalist lawyer Antonio Oposa Jr.

Marañon was serving his last term as representative of the province's second district, while Oposa, chair of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-National Environmental Action Plan, had just published his two books on the environment laws and environment.

The outgoing congressman took a map and pointed at the Visayan Sea. Oposa then raised the idea to Capt. Rene Estampador, president of the Maritime Services and Marine Inc., who is his partner in the sail and dive expedition.

Estampador explained that he and Oposa would sail to a coastal municipality and dive to check its marine life. Then, they would conduct teach-ins to the youth in the area about the need to protect the marine.

Slowly, the VSS project started to take shape with a mission to eradicate illegal fishing practices through three components—education, engineering and enforcement.

Core team

The squadron will have a core team of two teachers, four divers, and two or three law enforcement officers. Other members are volunteer fishermen, divers, fish wardens, and Bantayan Dagat personnel of participating local government units.

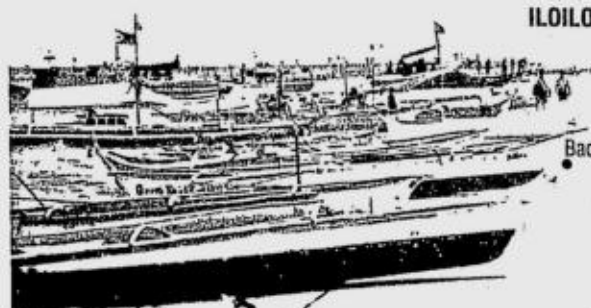
Volunteers will be trained on procedures pertaining to the arrest and prosecution of illegal fishers because part of their task is to search and destroy the supply lines of blasting powder and sodium cyanide.

National agencies will provide logistical support to the squadron. Among them are the Coast Guard (maritime safety), Navy (gunboat to escort the members), National Bureau of Investigation (intelligence gathering and investigation) and the Department of Agriculture (rice subsidy to volunteers).

The volunteer fishermen will be given two kilos of rice per day to compensate for the days that they are not able to earn money to buy food for their families.

Each motorized boat will bear the Philippine

With the Visayan Sea on the verge of collapse, something has to be done fast.



flag as a symbol of unity to what they are fighting for and to scare away illegal fishers, Oposa said.

He said the team would spend five to six days per trip from March to June 30, this year up to 2010.

The squadron intends to conduct 50 "explorations" during the five-year period. It will not conduct patrol operations in July when the rainy season starts.

Operation

The VSS members will conduct patrol operations and sail to a coastal town considered a "hot spot" to conduct a survey on the marine resources. This month, their first stop will be northern Cebu.

The group will report its findings to the chief executive of local government unit concerned, with a warning that it will be back within one year to check if something has been done. If no action was taken, charges of neglect of duty will be charged against the mayor before the environmental Ombudsman.

The VSS will then advise the mayor that at least 15 percent of the municipal waters must be devoted to a marine sanctuary in accordance with Republic Act No. 8550 or the Fisheries Code of the Philippines.

Volunteers will also organize the fisherfolk, especially the youth, and teach them about the need to conserve and protect seas. The youth will be taught about the law to help eradicate illegal fishing in their area.

As some of its volunteers are lawyers, the group will assist the LGUs in drafting and preparing ordinances on marine protection. They will assist the fisherfolk in developing options for sustainable alternative sources of livelihood.

The Law of Nature Foundation, headed by Oposa, will serve as overall team leader to coordinate the activities and call on other government agencies to help enforce and prosecute cases of illegal fishing.

The foundation, along with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Philippine Bar Association, will form a legal panel to assist squadron members who may be the subject of a harassment suit while performing their duties.

Maiden voyage

The VSS was launched at the Bantayan Marine Sanctuary in Sta. Fe on March 12. Governors Gwendolyn Garcia of Cebu, Joseph Marañon of Negros Occidental, and Neil Tupas of Iloilo, and Environment Secretary Michael Defensor and his predecessor, Eliza Gozun, came in a show of support and commitment to the campaign.

About 200 people, including local officials of Bantayan, Cebu and Masbate, PBA officials, personnel from the NBI, Coast Guard, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Navy, divers and fishers, signed a "Bantayan Island Declaration of Commitment" as an expression of their "collective will to restore the abundance and former glory of the Visayan Sea."

They vowed to pool their resources and create a "unified" VSS squadron.

The local officials promised to give their

consent when the squadron entered their municipal waters for patrol or pursuit operations.

No politics, please

The declaration also carried a clause on "non-intervention by political personalities"



THE VISAYAN Sea
Squadron was launched at the Bantayan Marine Sanctuary in Sta. Fe, Cebu on March 12.

in case their friends, relatives or political leaders were caught and later prosecuted for illegal fishing.

"Any person or public official who will unduly interfere shall be reported to the team leader. The team leader shall then cause the investigation and, where warranted, the filing of the appropriate charges against the person for obstruction of justice, or if a public officer, for violation of the Code of Conduct of Public Officials, Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices, violation of human rights, etc.," it stated.

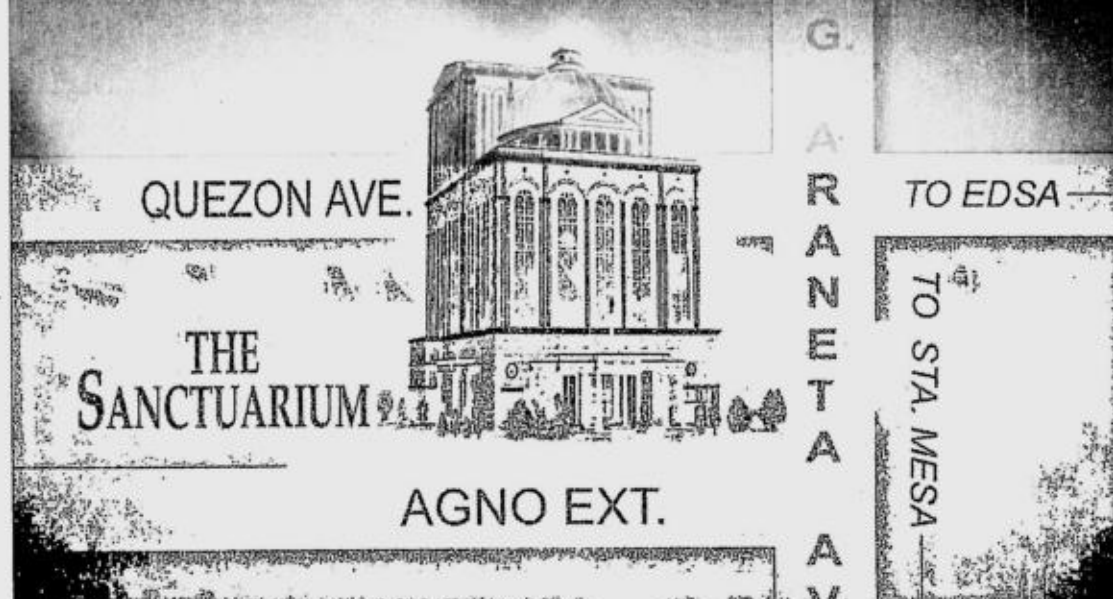
The signatories agreed to review and harmonize their ordinances in accordance to the standard set by the Fisheries Code.

The VSS squadron appears to be a skeptic an ambitious campaign, but with the political will, determination and commitment of the people involved, especially the concerned local officials, it can be done.

They only have to remember one thing: "In the laws of nature, there is no right or wrong, no reward or punishment, but only consequences."

Those interested to extend help in the form of volunteer divers, boats, logistics and moral support may email thelawofnature@axi.com.

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Cop chief gets 'persona non grata' label

LUCENA CITY—The city legislative council has declared Quezon police chief, Senior Supt. Leo Kison, as "persona non grata" after Kison snubbed several invitations for him to appear before the local officials.

Resolution No. 13-166, authored by Councilor Rey Oliver Alejandro during the regular session on March 14, said Kison has been invited to appear in the session on at least four occasions but the police official failed to show up.

The council said Kison's non-appearance "has prejudiced the welfare and interest of the people" of Lucena City.

The council said the police official did not even bother to reply to communication sent to him.

"The said police officer has even boasted in a radio interview that he is not in any way under the Sangguniang Panglungsod of Lucena City," the resolution said.

The local officials said Kison acted in bad faith and did not abide by his oath as an officer and a gentleman.

But Kison explained that it was not his intention to snub the city council.

"It just so happened that I always have previous commitments with my superiors in Camp Crame before I received

their invitations," he told the INQUIRER.

He said he sent one of his senior police officials as his representative in the last invitation.

"Besides, as far as what I understand, what they have sent me were mere invitations and not explicit orders for me to appear before them. Meaning, it still depends on my availability of time, which I did not have the luxury in the specified time of the invitation due to earlier commitments," Kison said.

He said the author of the resolution has an ax to grind against him after the recent relief of Lucena City police chief, Supt. Elmo Francis Sarona.

"Councilor Alejandro probably thinks that I have a hand in the relief of Superintendent Sarona, his best friend. The order came from Canlubang and not from me," Kison said.

On March 14, Supt. Conrad Capa replaced Sarona as the new Lucena police chief.

Kison had been on the spot last week after one of his policemen came out in the open and pointed at him as the one who ordered the assassination of a local radio broadcaster.

However, Kison strongly denied the allegation. Delfin Malari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Solon seeks arrest of Pampanga treasurer on quarry

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The vice chair of the House committee on natural resources recommended the arrest of a Pampanga official who said he has not seen fake receipts and did not know that these were being used in the provincial government's collection of sand taxes.

Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis, vice chair of the House committee on natural resources that was investigating the quarry income, ordered the arrest of Pampanga treasurer Vergel Yabut for "contempt and lies" during the hearing on Wednesday.

But Solis withheld his recom-

mendation on the appeal of Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras and Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Roseller Barinaga for due process.

Yabut earned the ire of the members of the committee who found it unbelievable that he was unaware of the anomaly.

Agusan del Norte Rep. Leovigildo Banaag, committee chair, warned Yabut and ordered him to give accurate statements in the next hearings.

Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo accused Yabut of "making a mockery of the mandate of the committee."

Arroyo said it was impossible for Yabut not to know about the alleged irregularity when there

were published reports on this and when Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao exposed this in a privilege speech on Jan. 24.

Solis compelled Yabut to recite his tasks and functions as treasurer.

"I will recommend for your dismissal," Solis warned.

"You have fixed the papers so your group would not be pinned for a wrongdoing," he said of Yabut's activities in the past weeks.

Paras called for other provincial officials to testify.

"We don't know if this person is protecting somebody," he said.

Guiao said Yabut and other members of the provincial fi-

nance committee had also declined requests for them to attend hearings called for by the provincial board on quarry operations.

Yabut was placed on the hot seat after provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas referred Sanlakas Rep. Renato Magtubo's question on fake receipts to the treasurer.

Yabut swore that he assumed the post in April 2004. But he served the post in an acting capacity since September 2003, Arroyo learned.

Magtubo disputed claims by Arcenas that sand revenues reached P5.6 million from January to March 15 due to "innovations" in the collection system.

GMA visits fast-expanding service provider firm

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo recently visited the facility in Dumaguete City of one of the fastest growing service providers in the country owned by a Filipino-founded firm that is now recognized as one of the world's leaders in the business.

The facility is owned by SPI Technologies Inc. and is intended primarily for the company's publishing services operations.

It is part of a P3 billion expansion program that SPI is aggressively pursuing this year, said Ernest Cu, president and chief executive officer, in a press statement.

The 25-year-old SPI has evolved into a multi-country service provider with more than 6,500 specialists in 25 locations across the United States, Europe and Asia. About 65 percent, or 4,000, of the

company's workforce is in the Philippines.

The addition of 450 seats in Dumaguete will boost SPI's editorial and copy-editing services for over 550 journal titles for some of the world's leading Scholarly, Scientific, Technical, and Medical (SSTM) publishers.

Cu said SPI is confident it can compete favorably in the global SSTM publishing market. The Dumaguete facility is SPI's newest center for publisher services and complements its other units in Manila and the Indian cities of Pondicherry, Kolkata, and New Delhi.

SPI is growing rapidly in its target markets. Recently, it signed an agreement to buy the medical transcription business of India-based KG Information Services Private Ltd. (KGMT).



IAN BELLORD, senior vice president of the SPI Technologies, gives Ms Arroyo a briefing on the firm's Dumaguete expansion.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ROUNDUP

Probe on buildings lease urged

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—Parents of school children in this town have asked the Department of Education to investigate the alleged massive defrauding of the government by many school officials here who lease school buildings as privately-operated canteens. Ma. Jonem Gacad, vice president of a parent-teacher community association, assailed the officials' alleged anomalous practice of leasing school buildings, the payment for which, she said, are not being remitted to the government coffers. Gacad said the monthly rentals of school canteens are neither remitted to the government nor pass through the Commission on Audit.

Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Village dad sued for logging

ORION, Bataan—Environment officials in Pilar town on Friday sued a barangay councilor and his brother for illegal logging. Officials of the community environment and natural resources office filed the charges against Serafin Vargas, councilman of Barangay General Lim, and his brother, Danilo. Police said the suspects were arrested following a tip from residents that the Vargas brothers were involved in illegal logging. Seized from the brothers' house were 300 board feet of illegally cut logs taken from the forested area near the foot of Mt. Samat Shrine in Pilar.

Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

3 held for fake cigarettes

BALANGA CITY—Police arrested three men on Friday while they were delivering fake brand cigarettes to several customers in the city market. Arrested were Anthony Arandela, 35; Jessie Llameta, 19; and Wilson Bonabra, 18, all of Pampanga. Seized from them were 50 reams of fake Winston cigarettes. Police officials here said a representative of Fortune Tobacco Corp., the manufacturer of Winston, sought the help of the police to stop the proliferation of fake Winston cigarettes in the city market.

Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Fish sanctuaries for tourism

CITY OF CALAPAN—Provincial planning and development coordinator Cesar Tallada said the provincial government is boosting tourism in the province by putting up the Mindoro Wildlife Protection Center and developing 13 fish sanctuaries as tourism sites. He said they were also coming up with the Provincial Tourism Code and Provincial Tourism

Master Plan, which are aligned with the Tourism Development Plan under the Mimaropa Highway Development Plan for 2005-2020. Tallada said agriculture and tourism are two major programs in the 15-year strategic development plan brought about by the Strong Republic National Highway in Oriental Mindoro.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mindoro Port construction

CITY OF CALAPAN—Philippine Ports Authority Port Services Division manager Eren Leynes said the construction of the Balatatan port in Bulalacao, the southernmost town of Oriental Mindoro, is now under way. The opening of the port will speed up trips to Boracay, Palawan and Antique, according to Elpidio Contreras Jr., executive assistant at the Bulalacao mayor's office. Leynes also announced that the construction of the P45-million Pola port in Barangay Tigulhan had already been completed. The port will open trips to Batangas, Marinduque, Quezon and other nearby areas.

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Lack of contraceptives

BONGABONG, Oriental Mindoro—The campaign for safe pregnancy and responsible parenthood is doing good but there is not enough condom from the government, according to Victoria Maramot, midwife supervisor from the Department of Health-Oriental Mindoro who is assigned in this town. Maramot said her office had been disseminating information through house-to-house visits and assemblies. She said the DOH-Oriental Mindoro targets 25 percent of the province's more than 700,000 population

Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



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Draw	Game Date	Out-Of	Draw	Prize
Q1	March 9	March 12	March 14	Apple iPod 8GB
Q2	March 16	March 19	March 22	Canon PowerShot A70
Q3	March 23	March 26	March 29	Apple iPod 8GB
Q4	March 31	April 3	April 6	Canon PowerShot A70
Q5	April 10	April 13	April 16	Apple iPod 8GB
Q6	April 17	April 20	April 23	Canon PowerShot A70
Q7	April 24	April 27	April 30	Apple iPod 8GB
Q8	April 31	April 30	May 3	Canon PowerShot A70
Q9	May 1	May 7	May 9	Apple iPod 8GB & P100,000 cash

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- The winner drawn from the preliminary draw (Q1-Q8) automatically gets to win a Gypsy doll. An additional prize (Apple iPod or Canon Digitalcam) is given if he/she sent a correct answer.
- The five (5) entries drawn for the final draw (Q9) will automatically receive a cash prize of P20,000.00 each. An additional P80,000.00 cash prize will be given to those with correct answer.
- A copy of PDI's notification/confirmation letter.
- PDI must send (including date) taken from issue where question was published.
- Prize must be claimed within sixty (60) days after receipt of confirmation letter. Unclaimed prizes will be forfeited in favor of PDI with prior DTI approval.
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- Promo period is from March 8 to May 7, 2005.

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1123, Series of 2005.

US to deport Lacson aide, says NBI official

From page A1

was] confusion as to who really made the arrest," he said.

Aquino and Cesar Mancao, also a former police superintendent and ex-associate of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, are charged with the November 2000 abduction and murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito.

Supt. Glenn Dumlao had tagged Aquino and Mancao in the murders, along with several other members of

the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force, which Lacson once headed.

Undocumented aliens

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the Department of Foreign Affairs had earlier canceled Aquino and Mancao's travel papers, making them "undocumented aliens" in the United States.

The two men were able to flee the country in July 2001 despite hold-departure orders issued in May of that

year. They were said to have flown to Hong Kong on fake passports, and later to the United States on genuine travel documents.

But Diaz reiterated yesterday that the NBI had no warrant to arrest Aquino because the court had rejected Dumlao's statement linking him and Mancao to the murders.

"We have no authority to arrest him. We can only post him on the watch list," Wycoco said, adding that authorities were still looking for Mancao.

Responding to Lacson's statement on Thursday that the NBI's disclosure of Aquino's arrest was malicious and intended to pressure him to endorse the confirmation of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Wycoco said: "We never linked [Aquino] to any civic, religious or political leader." Aquino, a 1988 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, had denied involvement in the

murders and said investigators were framing him.

He and Mancao are also charged with rebellion in connection with the Labor Day siege of Malacañang in 2001, and, together with Lacson and several other police officers, with drug trafficking, murder, kidnapping, serious illegal detention and wiretapping. **Margaux C. Ortiz**

No way Malacañang supporting ...

From page A1

Gabriela women's group, filed the other day House Bill No. 4016 which seeks to allow couples to apply for divorce if they had been separated for five years and had been legally separated for two years.

The party-list representative claimed that Philippine society was now ready for the legalization of divorce. She also assured that her bill would provide enough safeguards to ensure that the institutions of marriage and family were not destroyed.

No divorce only in RP, Malta

The Philippines is the last nation on earth, besides the tiny Mediterranean island state of Malta, where divorce is not legal. And, like contraception, the issue is seldom openly discussed for fear of incurring the wrath of the Catholic Church which still holds considerable influence over the country's politics and government.

But with a growing number of women demanding the right to divorce in the archipelago nation, the controversial subject is now back on the political agenda.

The last attempt to legalize divorce in the Philippines was made during the last Congress (2001-2004). Despite being well-drafted, the bill died on the Congress floor without a vote.

So don't marry

Not even a "Pinoy-style" divorce bill can convince the Catholic Church to allow the dissolution of marriage.

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday belittled the bill filed by party-list Rep. Liza Maza, saying the Church was sure to "bury" efforts like this.

"They come and go and this is not something new," Cruz, past president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, told reporters. "The Church is more than 2,000 years old and it's still standing. But those who filed divorce (bills) in the past are already gone. It's really difficult to go against the Church."

He said the same would be the fate of the controversial Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act of 2005, an effort the Church has described as actually "anti-life."

Cruz, a Canon Law expert, said a divorce law would go against the constitutional provision of the state protecting the family as the basic unit of society.

"If you have all these means to dissolve family ties, then either you amend the Constitution to accommodate (them) or you do not get married anymore," he said.

And contrary to what Maza pro-divorce people claim, Msgr. Hernando Coronel, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines secretary general, said the Church has ways to deal with broken marriages.

Coronel spoke of a variety of Church-initiated programs to "repair" these relationships with the help of the

Christian community.

"Our goal is to make a marriage work because what God has put together, no one should cast asunder," he told reporters.

"We don't want to see the day when there would be a man-made law superseding God's law," he said in Filipino.

Outdated

Women's groups, however, see the Church's views on divorce as outdated and out of step with the realities of life in the 21st century.

Carolina Ruiz-Austria, a lawyer and executive director of the Women's Legal Education, Advocacy and Defense Foundation, said there was a desperate need for the law to be amended.

"Legal annulments are very costly and women who can afford it go down that road," she said.

"A medium-sized law firm can charge anything from P50,000 to P100,000. But this is not an avenue open to the vast majority of people in the Philippines because they simply do not have the money," Ruiz-Austria said.

In May last year, President Ricardo Lagos signed a law legalizing civil divorce in Chile despite strong opposition from the Catholic Church.

Chile

Chile's divorce law was passed by Congress after 10 years of debate. It replaced legislation which had been in effect for 120 years. More than 75 percent of Chileans are Catholic.

When Chile legalized divorce, all of South America, which is predominantly Catholic, allow divorce.

Ireland

Ireland, another staunch Catholic nation, legalized divorce in 1997 when "The Family Law (Divorce) Act" became law. For years, Ireland which is about 78 percent Catholic, was the only European country without a divorce law.

Spain, which brought Catholicism to the country more than 300 years ago, managed to legalize divorce in 1981 after a bitter fight with the Church.

The Philippines is braced for a similar battle. **With AFP, PDI Research**



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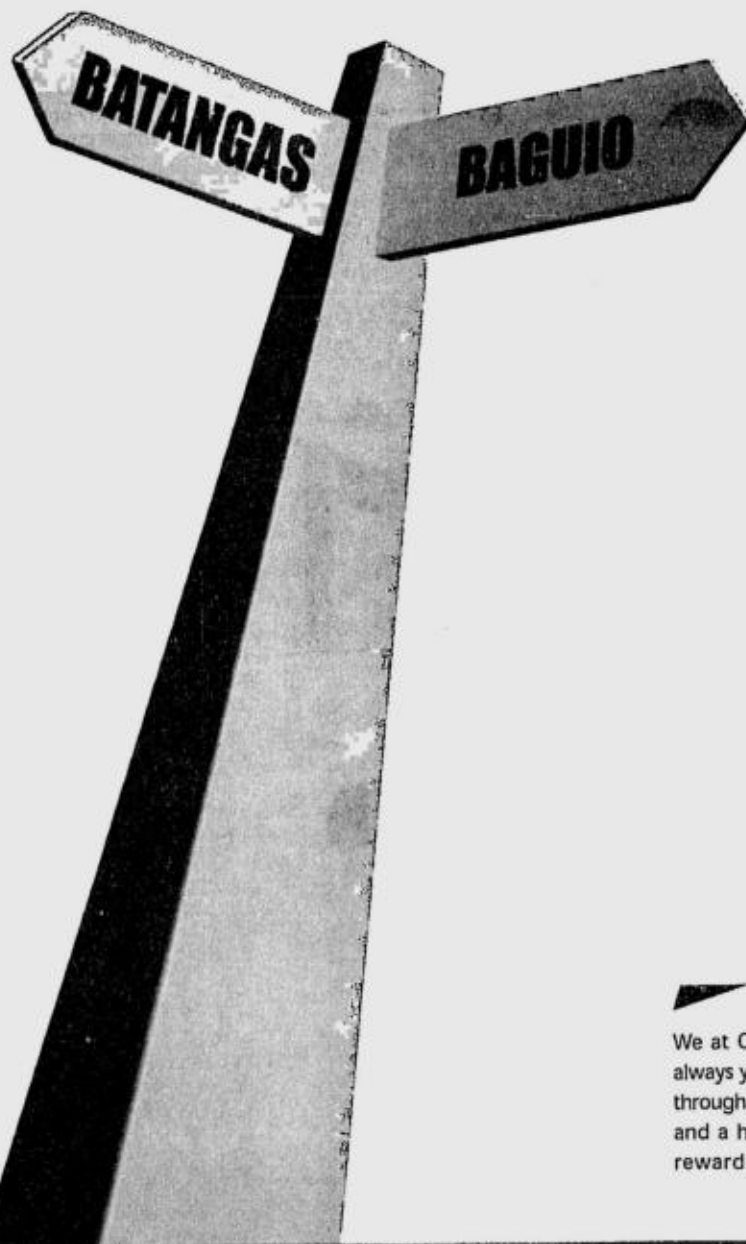
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Holy week plot real-PNP

From page A1

suspect in the Zamboanga City 2002 bombing; Abu Haisham, who allegedly trained recently in Mt. Cararao in Lanao; Abu Omar; Abu Tarik, an explosives expert allegedly trained by the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI); Abu Zaid, and Abu Yasin, an Indonesian JI member.

Police have distributed sketches of the supposed bombers, except for Tarik and Zaid, to stations nationwide.

Asked if the attacks were intended as retaliation for the killing of Abu Sayyaf Commanders Kosovo, Global and Robot, Lomibao said: "It could be, because as we heard Abu Solaiman over the radio, he was trying to warn or tell everybody that they will conduct retaliatory attacks as a result of what happened in [Camp Bagong Diwa]."

"That's one factor that we are trying to consider. Second, the Holy Week is fast approaching. With these two conditions, we feel we should upgrade our security measures."

On radar screen

According to Rafanan, Solaiman reiterated his order to his men to carry out the bombings "very recently."

"They have always been on our radar screen," he said. "Only recently have we obtained information that the order to conduct terrorist activities have been reiterated to them."

A senior intelligence official speaking on condition of anonymity said Solaiman was furious because Kosovo was a relative.

Lomibao appealed to the public to immediately inform the police or military of "suspicious-looking" persons in their communities. "Call 117, text 2920 or go to the nearest police or military station," he said.

Rafanan said information on

'Very good job'

In Basilan, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she had faith in the agencies in charge of protecting public security.

"I think the security agencies that we have are doing a very, very good job of taking care of our security, and I'm not one to micromanage when the agencies are doing a very good job," she told

reporters.

The President said authorities had put security measures in place.

"There is no reason for the public to be alarmed," her spokesperson, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, said in a statement he issued in Malacañang and in a news briefing later.

Solaiman's order had come from police and military sources, and affirmed by the Department of Justice's own reports.

Gappal Bana, a key suspect in the Valentine's Day bomb attack in Makati City, has supposedly also "validated" the information.

"For the past two days, we have received additional information that they (Abu Sayyaf members) are really bent on pursuing their terrorist activities," Rafanan said.

No terrorist group

Lomibao took pains to say that Muslim converts, or members of the Balik Islam movement, were not terrorists.

"Please, let us not mistake the Balik Islam as a terrorist organization," he said. "Let that be [made] clear to everybody. Let it be clear it is not a terrorist organization. What we are saying is that some [of its] members are influenced by terrorists."

Lomibao also said the supposed bombing targets were populated areas like shopping malls, public markets and bus terminals.

He said the supposed bombings were meant to sow terror "not only domestically but also internationally."

The PNP is not discarding the possibility of a car bomb.

"We are considering that," Lomibao said. "These men are bomb-trained, so ... part of the training could be in car bombing."

Still being verified

On the other hand, Director Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the supposed Abu Sayyaf bomb plot was still being verified.

Nevertheless, he said, the PNP had beefed up security in high-risk areas to prevent the alleged plot from succeeding.

"We can't wait for the verification to happen. Even if the information has not been confirmed, we're putting in place security measures to deter the action of the terrorists," he said.

Speaking in a forum at a hotel in Manila, Razon confirmed that the PNP had received information on the supposed planned bombing of churches from a suspected Abu Sayyaf member arrested in connection with the Valentine's Day bombing in Makati.

He said he had alerted all district directors and station commanders to enforce precautionary measures in their areas.

Razon also said he would mobilize "force multipliers"—or barangay officials who are in

charge of securing their communities—to augment patrol teams.

He said he was considering meeting with church groups on the matter of security.

The PNP is also working to mend ties with Muslim communities following the bloody end to the crisis at Camp Bagong Diwa.

Razon said that he met yesterday with 59 Muslim leaders, and that the latter signified support for Lomibao.

He said he had also explained to the Muslim leaders the reason behind the police's decision to storm the prison facility that the suspected Abu Sayyaf members had put under siege.

"We presented to our Muslim brothers the incident report. We explained to them that the crisis management committee exerted all efforts to arrive at a peaceful resolution to the incident," Razon said.

Bishops not worried

Not even the bishops are worried about the supposed bomb threat from the Abu Sayyaf.

Activities set for the Holy Week will proceed as planned, said Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

"Churches will be open," he told reporters. "Priests will go about their duties. Masses will proceed as far as church men are concerned."

But Msgr. Hernando Coronel, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, advised the public to "take the necessary precautions."

"It's always better to be safe," he said.

Cruz, a former CBCP president, did not seem convinced that the Abu Sayyaf would go to the extent of bombing churches as part of its terrorist activities.

With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Christian V. Esguerra

Saudi man detained, then released at Naia

A SAUDI Arabian man, detained for suspected al-Qaida links after arriving at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, was turned over to the Saudi ambassador yesterday after investigators failed to find any evidence against him, Bureau of Immigration officials said.

The man, identified by the officials as Saudi Arabian national Abdullah Nassar al-Arifi, 34, appears on a US Federal Bureau of Investigation list of terror suspects, the officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Nassar arrived in Manila on March 16 on board Philippine Air Lines (PAL) 659 at 12:44 p.m. from Riyadh, according to Ferdinand Sampol, Naia immigration chief.

Sampol said the suspect's name was on the bureau's watch list, prompting the immigration officers to detain him. He was later brought to the BI main office in Intra-

muros, Manila for further interrogation.

Sampol said Al-Arifi had travelled alone and claimed to have gone here for a vacation.

"His name and date of birth jived with the list," Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez told DZMM radio.

The officials said earlier the man may have links to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, as well as the 2002 bombings in Bali, Indonesia.

But an investigation—which the officials said included the US Federal Bureau of Investigation—failed to link him to terrorism, and Al-Arifi was turned over to the Saudi ambassador on Friday, said an immigration intelligence official who declined to be identified.

The official said Al-Arifi would still be deported to Saudi Arabia because his name was on the US list. **Reports by Leila B. Salaverria, Nikko Dizon and AP**

Moro solon hits PNP ...

From page A1

ers shared the belief that the dead men were martyrs.

Hataman has filed a bill in Congress declaring March 18 "Bangsamoro Day," in commemoration of the Jabitah massacre on March 18, 1968.

On that day, at least 28 Muslim recruits being trained in Corregidor in jungle warfare for "Operation Merdeka," a planned invasion of Sabah, were killed by supposed Army men.

The government never made public the reason behind the massacre, but a survivor said the recruits were shot dead because they refused to take part in the invasion of the territory claimed by both the Philippines and Malaysia.

Hataman said the bill would help correct history lessons being taught in schools portraying Muslims as "barbarians."

Irresponsible

Hataman said government officials should be circumspect and avoid making inflammatory statements.

He said Pascual's criticism of Tabligh missionaries—that their teachings were contributing to the spread of extremism among Muslims—was "irresponsible."

"I hope he will correct that statement. He should know what he is talking about. The Tabligh only teaches proper conduct and prayer," Hataman said, citing his own experience in a Tabligh meeting.

Hataman also said that while police should be vigilant for terror attacks, statements like the justice department's warning of a purported Abu Sayyaf plot to bomb churches during Holy Week was alarmist.

"We should be on alert at all times, but we do not need to broadcast for the whole world to know that there is going to be an attack," Hataman said.

He said this would again worsen the relationship between Christian and Muslim communities.

Ending the violence

As it is, the relationship has been strained to the point of fraying.

Days after the bloody incident in Camp Bagong Diwa, a tricycle driver called out to a woman who had just emerged from her home in Cainta, Rizal: "Hoy, Abu Sabaya!"

The woman was wearing Muslim garb. Abu Sabaya was the Abu Sayyaf spokesperson who, according to the military, was killed last year in Zamboanga del Norte.

In the Quezon City home of a prominent Muslim family, a 4-year-old boy watched the live TV report on the assault and said: "When I grow up, I will fight the non-Muslims."

These are just some of the responses from ordinary Muslims and Christians that the Peacemakers' Circle is trying to address.

"Violence that is met with violence also produces more violence," said Peacemakers' Circle executive director Marites Africa. "We must put an end to this cycle of violence."

About a dozen members of the group met on Thursday to reflect on the events that led to the killing of 23 men, including a police officer, in Camp Bagong Diwa.

The group's message is simple

and unequivocal: Peace requires everyone's efforts.

"It requires hard work. Peace will only come if we all work to achieve it," said Alim Patina Abdul Malik of the Greenhills Musallah.

"Peace is our last resort. I hope everybody will realize that," the Islamic scholar said.

The group plans to hold an interfaith prayer on March 21 on Edsa, on the spot where a bomb exploded on Valentine's Day, killing three persons and wounding several others.

More terrorist than others

"We do not want to assign blame on anyone. But you know, the Abu Sayyaf killed three guards. They are terrorists. Then the police killed 22 men. Those who killed the innocent, they are more terrorist than the others," said St. Arnold Maria Noel of the Holy Spirit.

"When will the killing stop?" she said.

Some members of the group shed tears when Sitti Djalila Hataman, secretary general of the Moro Human Rights Center and wife of Congressman Hataman, read a statement on the death of the 22 Muslims during the assault.

Clapping his hands

Sitti Djalila said she was particularly hurt when she saw Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes clapping his hands after the assault.

"He was clapping his hands at what?" she said. "At the death of 22 Muslims?"

She also said those behind the jailbreak attempt on Monday must pay for the death of the jail guards. But what about the others who were killed, including a 75-year-old detainee who wet his bed? she said.

Sitti Djalila said many of those in jail with the Abu Sayyaf were facing trial. They were still suspects, she stressed.

"But still, we [must be] for peace. We believe that this incident will not justify the killing of innocent civilians—Muslims, Christians and whatever faith they may have," she said.

"But as we call for peace, we also cry for justice, for there can never be peace where there is no justice," she added.

Persecution

Mohammed Soria, a former priest and a Muslim convert, said he became afraid for his family when a tricycle driver called his wife "Abu Sabaya."

"My wife had just stepped out of our home when I heard the yell. I got really afraid for her, and for other Muslims," he said.

Other members of the Peacemakers' Circle group narrated how they had lived under persecution, mostly by authorities.

Islamic scholar Ibrahim Mata said he was forced to close a madrasah (Islamic school) in Manila early this month when law enforcers came looking for him and another teacher, Mohammed Nur.

Mata said he had apparently been tagged a terrorist, too.

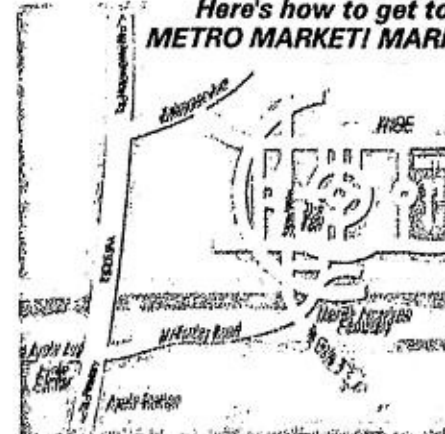
"Now the children are asking why their school is closed," said Nur. "They told me that if all Muslims are tagged as terrorists, they might as well become terrorists. This should not be happening."



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DOJ seeks Roldan transfer to jail

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

START the proceedings and transfer actor and former congressman Dennis Roldan to the Pasig City Jail.

This was the request of the Department of Justice in a comment filed before the Pasig City Regional Trial Court yesterday.

Roldan, whose real name is Mitchel Yap Gumabao, is the alleged mastermind in the abduction of a 3-year-old boy last month. He is still detained at Camp Crame.

In their comment, state prosecutors opposed the motion to suspend the proceedings Roldan had filed earlier.

Instead, they asked the Pasig City RTC Branch 261 to issue a commitment order against Roldan, and transfer him to the Pasig City Jail.

A day after the case was raffled off to the court, Roldan's lawyers immediately filed a motion to suspend the proceedings, and requested that the case be brought back to the justice department for preliminary investigation.

Roldan had also asked the court to withhold the issuance of an arrest warrant against him.

The defense had claimed Roldan was denied his right to a preliminary investigation.

But in their reply yesterday, the prosecution said a preliminary investigation had been conducted for Roldan and the other suspects.

Roldan had also petitioned a Quezon City court to seek his release from what he called a case of illegal detention and arrest. But the court had denied his petition.

"Sifting over the various moves

for the accused Roldan before different venues, it is obvious that he just wants to be released on bail," the prosecution said in its comment.

The defense would have to submit a reply to the prosecution's comment next week to resolve the matter, said branch clerk of court Roger Cadeleña.

Meanwhile, another suspect in the abduction, Romeo Orcajada yesterday claimed that he was promised he would be free if he would testify against Roldan. He said he refused the offer.

Orcajada alleged he was brought to the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response office noon on March 15 where he saw two of his fellow suspects, a police official and private prosecutor Mario Ongkiko, and was told to sign a supplemental affidavit in exchange "for a lot of things."

BJMP head bats for new prison

By Norman Bordadora

THE DIRECTOR of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) yesterday said that the serious concerns raised by the recent Taguig jailbreak tragedy would be addressed if a proposal to set up an integrated jail for Metro Manila were to be carried out.

The BJMP is now under investigation for alleged procedural lapses that gave detained Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leaders the opportunity to stage an escape and take over a portion of the Bicutan jail's maximum security area.

BJMP director Arturo Alit said that if any good can be said to have come out of the bloody attempt to break out of the Bicutan jail by the detained ASG leaders, it was to emphasize the need for a modern integrated jail for the national capital region.

"This is not to say that the Bicutan crisis was a positive development for the penal system but it showed the need for an integrated jail," Alit said in a phone interview.

The proposed Metro Manila Integrated Jail is intended for those inmates awaiting trial and who are being held in major city jails, including the Metro Manila District Jail in Bicutan, Taguig.

The Department of Interior and Local Government and the BJMP had been studying the proposal for a number of years.

At least four sites had been proposed for the modern integrated prison. Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus and Alit said the most favored site is the police camp in Tanay, Rizal.

"The only problem with coming up with a modern jail facility is funding," Alit said, underlining the financial problems of the BJMP which has had to make do with one jail guard for every 6,000 prisoners nationwide.

Alit said the BJMP is looking into getting the local governments of Metro Manila's towns and cities to help fund the facility.

The properties on which the jails now stand could then be used for other purposes by the cities and towns, he said.

Watch out for this scam artist

By Volt Contreras

AN ALLEGED scam artist based in Diliman, Quezon City, is posing as a United Nations official to carry out money transfers to dubious humanitarian projects.

The Department of Foreign Affairs disclosed the operations of the alleged scam artist for reporters yesterday.

The DFA warned the public against a certain "Thomas Stewart" who has reportedly been recruiting fund "couriers" for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Contributions

The couriers would be asked to deposit money in their own bank accounts.

The amounts represented "contributions" to UN humanitarian projects from "donors."

They are then expected to transfer the funds immediately to OCHA's alleged account.

The DFA said the couriers would then be allowed to pocket "five percent" of the contributions they could transfer.

The amount was apparently given as "compensation for their services," the foreign office added.

False representation

Stewart had been misusing the UN name and logo while "falsely representing himself" as an OCHA official in phone or email correspondences with his potential recruits, the department said in a statement.

The Philippine mission to the UN headed by Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr. alerted the DFA about the alleged scam.

Main office

The suspect allegedly operates from a "main office" in Diliman.

He was detected by the UN in New York where he discovered he had put up a website "identical" to the official OCHA site, complete with the UN name and logo.

Stewart would refer job candidates to this website—www.ochaonline.org/agreement/agreement.eng.rtf—where they can download an "Employment Agreement" for them to fill up.

Unauthorized

"Mr. Stewart's correspondence and the 'Employment Agreement' located in the website are false and unauthorized by the UN and (have) no relations with the international agency," the DFA said, quoting Baja.

Collegian's CSC anti-corruption drive begins at home

By Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE Collegian, official student publication of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City is facing another controversy.

Three losing candidates are protesting the results of the recent editorial examination to choose the editor of one of the largest and most influential student publications in the country.

Katrina Macapagal, John Paul Corpus, and Wendell Gumban sent a protest letter dated March 8 to the board of judges headed by Prof. Georgina Encanto.

They claimed that the winner, Juan Paolo Colet, and student judge Francis Alvin Asilo were both members of the Upsilon Sigma Phi fraternity. Another student judge, Tara Ann Vea, was reportedly the girlfriend of another Upsilon member.

The protesters also alleged Colet did not follow the board of judges' instructions regarding the placement of the examinee's number. "Instead of placing the number on the top left corner of the page, Mr. Colet put his number at the top center of the page."

Also, Colet "distinctly capitalized all letters of the first few words in his news exam."

The three said, "All of these render the result of the editorial examinations problematic, if not anomalous. The distinct markings made by Mr. Colet, compounded (by) his relationship with the student judges, puts in question the credibility of the result of the editorial examination. Mr. Colet persisted in making distinct markings in his examination (papers) despite the board of judges' instructions."

The three asked Encanto to disqualify Colet and to show the examinees' scores.

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE CIVIL Service Commission (CSC) is cleaning its own backyard first as it embarks on a campaign to weed out corrupt and inefficient government employees.

The CSC is coordinating with the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in curbing the proliferation of fake civil service eligibilities that lead to the employment of unqualified applicants in government agencies.

CSC chair Karina Constantino-David said the effort to cleanse the civil service ranks followed the recent discovery of the illegal activities of four former commission employees.

"These employees connived to undermine the most important aspect of the CSC: the recruit-

ment of government personnel," David said.

The NBI has recommended the prosecution of Antonio Agustin of B62, L15, Longinos St., Lagro Subdivision, Novaliches, Quezon City; Elizabeth Tolosa of No. 6, Maningning St., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City; Edmar Alfaro of No. 129 Panay Ave., South Triangle, Quezon City; and Ferdinand Aganad of No. 51-B Arpad 23, Project 8, Quezon City.

The four were suspected of involvement in the 2003 and 2004 CSC-Computer Assisted Test (CAT) irregularities that benefited 52 examinees.

The investigation was prompted by a request for NBI assistance by Agnes Padilla, director of the CSC's National Capital Region.

A case worth watching

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



this. He was an unsuspecting buyer.

When Nissan Gallery filed a case for replevin, an action to recover personal property, with the Quezon City regional trial court, law enforcement agents went to Batugal to confiscate his car.

But Batugal wouldn't want to part with the car he bought in good faith from Nissan Gallery. He reasoned that Nissan Gallery gave him the receipt and an exit permit for the Nissan X-Trail.

When he came to me for advice, I told him he should not give back the car since he was issued a receipt for it by Nissan Gallery itself. He was not at fault if the deal between Nissan and Manhattan



THE ICEMAN COMETH

Ice cream vendors make more frequent stops in the neighborhood, and are a refreshing sight in the streets of the metropolis, especially with the advent of a long, hot summer.

RUDY ESPERAS

Japanese using 27 policemen escorts?

By Armand N. Nocom

THE PRESIDENT of a condominium tenants association in San Juan has filed a complaint in the justice department about the presence of policemen allegedly from the Taguig City police force who could be guarding a Japanese who owns at least five units at the Goldland Tower Condominium.

Co-owners and tenants of the condominium building have also complained to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez that Shigiyoshi Kato was guarded by at least 27 policemen, including a "Col. Uyame," "Maj. Peralta," "Maj. Bentaen," and "Lt. Tolentino," who is reportedly assigned to the Traffic Management Group.

A list sent to Gonzalez by Philip de Belen, president of the condominium tenants association, identified the other policemen guarding Kato as Police Inspectors 1 Prospero Agonoy, Noel Mertacio, Joseph Pradela, Ethel Ramandaban, Rogelio Ramos, Francisco Aquino, and Kristo John Ramirez, among others.

Gonzalez wrote Philippine National Police Dir. Gen. Arturo Lumibao yesterday, saying that Kato

"is allegedly causing trouble in the condominium and enjoying the protection of several high ranking police officers and enlisted PNP personnel." He requested that Lumibao conduct an investigation on the matter.

Apart from the Japanese, he said he had been told that a PO1 Eric Rodriguez had also reportedly figured in the mauling of a private security guard in the building.

An initial check with the Bureau of Immigration showed that Kato had no records there, said Gonzalez, prompting him to order the BI to check if Kato may have entered the country using a "different passport."

"According to the complaint, Kato has police motorcycle escorts when he drives around town," he said, adding he had already reported the matter to Taguig Mayor Freddie Tiña.

Police Supt. Ramon Reyes, Taguig police chief, however, said the names mentioned on the list are not in their roster of policemen. "We have only 270 policemen. We are severely undermanned. How we can send out our men elsewhere when we are in dire need of their services?"

played this official's boyfriend, a married doctor, as vice president upon the recommendation of this official.

But when another newly opened nursing school applied for a permit from CHed, the same official rejected the application. Why? Because the new applicant would compete with the nursing school where she is employed as consultant.

Neat, huh?

Why does a Caloocan City judge continue to hold on to the theft case filed by a local businessman against Australians who hired him as a sub-contractor in a railway project?

The judge disapproved recently the motion of the Australians to travel, as well as to quash the case after government prosecutors found no reason to pursue the complaint.

The country's image is again being tarnished in the international community because of this case.

METROBRIEFS

Fire summit

SAYING that the escalating number of fire incidents makes a mockery of the celebration of "Fire Prevention Month," a group of firefighters called on the national government yesterday to hold a fire summit. Van Resurreccion, chairman of the Foundation for Filipino Fire Fighters (F4) said that for the month of March alone, more than 20 fires had already been reported. The F4 is a Caloocan City-based organization composed of active firefighters and safety-minded citizens. The summit, Resurreccion said, could tackle the updating of the now obsolete Fire Code and the problems now confronting the Bureau of Fire Protection where some of the firemen belong. "Through a fire summit, a comprehensive approach can be crafted with ideas coming from all sectors of society," he said. **Nancy C. Carvajal**

World H.E. Day

THE PHILIPPINES joins the rest of the world in observing World Home Economics Day today with a symposium. "Home Economic Supporting Sustainable Development and Quality of Life for All," at 8:30 a.m., to be held at the Philippine Women's University Conrado Benitez Hall, Taft Ave., Manila. The keynote speaker is former Senator Dr. Helena Z. Benitez, chairperson of Philippine Home Economics Foundation, who will be introduced by its president, Rosario Villar.

For entrepreneurs

LISTEN, learn and interact with today's remarkable entrepreneurs: Hen Lin's Mariano Manas and Lots 'A Pizza's Teresita Ngan Tian at the 6th Kapilang EntrePinoy today at the College of Saint Benilde Angelo King International Center in Malate.

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BASKETBALL: NBA - Lakers vs Pacers; 8:30 a.m. (9 p.m.); ESPN: Warriors vs Suns; 10 a.m. (9 p.m.); Solar Sports - LA visits Indiana while Golden State and Phoenix engage in a western showdown.



Compiled by L. Mangiat

SATURDAY,
MARCH 19, 2005

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WHAT'S INSIDE



■ **Alaska spills Shell for first win** /A27



■ **Heat melt Lakers, sweep season series** /A28



■ **Delariarte 4 up with another 68** /A30

ACCUSATIONS FLY

Team confusion endangering Pacquiao bid

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS—An innocent pre-fight retina check yesterday exposed serious team trouble that has threatened to diminish Manny Pacquiao's chances against Erik Morales in their showdown.

Pacquiao refused the eye drop required in the test for fear it would blur his vision all the way to his big fight on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

His refusal led to the swapping of vicious charges between his old and new backers.

Cormerman Lito Mondejar attested that Pacquiao had refused to follow a directive from the Nevada State Athletic Commission because a strong liquid used in a previous process had "rendered him half-blind for three days."

The eye test, required of all boxers fighting in Nevada, should have been conducted much earlier, not three days before the fight, Mondejar said.

Somebody in Team Pacquiao goofed.

With the Pacquiao refusal, tension gripped the promotion after it was announced that the Filipino fighter would be barred from entering the ring on Saturday if he did not undergo the medical requirements.

Next came fears of a fight cancellation.

Roach blamed

Mondejar blamed trainer Freddie Roach whom he accused of failing to follow the medical requirements during training in Los Angeles.

"This is unforgivable, they should've not let this happen," Mondejar said.

Interviewed by the INQUIRER, Roach claimed Pacquiao had been properly

checked but his papers were lost by the California clinic that did it.

The California check-up was supposedly done on March 4.

However, promoter Murad Muhammad and business manager Rod Nazario got mad after they learned that Roach had allegedly lied.

The two, members of the old set of Pacquiao backers, allegedly discovered that no medical check was done on Pacquiao in California. Others in the old group were Mondejar and Moy Lainez, technical adviser.

New group

With the eye check-up issue raging, the outspoken Murad proceeded to lash at the new group that has taken over Pacquiao's affairs, composed of manager Shelly Finkel, lawyer Keith Davidson, publicist Winchell Campos and trainer Roach.

"He (Roach) did not pay attention to his responsibilities and we did not know this until we were told by the commission," Murad said. "I feel bad because, every fight, we make sure that our athlete has the edge mentally, physically, medically."

Nazario, head of the original group that charted Pacquiao to stardom, has not been seeing the boxer whom he has treated like a son, although they both stay at the MGM Grand here.

"We don't know what's going on," Murad



A NEW group of young hangers-on is said to be endangering Manny Pacquiao's health.

rued. "What disturbs me is that we had bond, unity, and love."

With the confusion threatening to escalate, Murad was quick to stress that it was neither his nor Nazario's fault.

"Hindi na kagaya dati (It's no longer like before)," said Mondejar of the original group.

He said he has stopped visiting Pacquiao in his room at the MGM Grand that has been dominated by a group of young hangers-on.

There used to be strict procedure under the old group.

Seen gambling

The prevailing loose set-up was first exposed when Pacquiao was seen gambling in the black jack section of the MGM casino after breakfast earlier in the week while a band of hangers-on cheered behind him.

This was the same gang that had endangered the boxer's health after it had allowed Pacquiao to be driven around by a member who was visibly going down with the flu for

days on end.

Pacquiao's limbs were also put at great risk when the same driver delivered Manny at a killing pace from Los Angeles to here.

The strange set-up inside Team Pacquiao was further confirmed yesterday through the snobbish treatment given by Joseph Ramos, a new Pacquiao hanger-on, who turned away members of the Manila media when they requested for a small statement from the boxing star.

"No comment, no comment," said Ramos who claimed Pacquiao was fast asleep, although there were loud voices behind the door when the media group knocked.

He stressed, peeping through a gap in the door, there's no way media could talk to his boss.

Meanwhile, it was learned that Pacquiao did take the required check-up after his final gym afternoon workout yesterday.

Mayor Pedro Acharon, who managed to talk later to Pacquiao, said the fighter was re

TEAM/A27

Las Vegas roulette: Gorres now up against Fil-Am foe

By Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

THE SUSPENSE regarding the identity of his foe continues, but at least Filipino fighter Z "The Dream" Gorres is assured of a slot in the undercard of the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales showdown.

A word of caution, though: he might still end up fighting another opponent tomorrow.

Less than a week after Gorres was matched against World Boxing Council mandatory challenger Jose Navarro of Colombia, the organizers came up with a new rival for the former Philippine flyweight champion.

This time, Gorres is slated to face Filipino-American Glenn Donaire in an 8-round bout underneath the Pacquiao-Morales clash.

The talented Gorres of Cebu's ALA Stable,



GORRES

was first scheduled to battle Russian

Dmitri Kirilov, who later backed out

when talks bogged down over the financial aspect of the fight.

Donaire reached the semifinals of the

last US Olympic Boxing Trials in Florida.

WBO Asia-Pacific chair Leon Panoncillo,

who is in Las Vegas to watch the Pacquiao-

Morales showdown, confirmed that the Gorres-Donaire bout has been scheduled.

Gorres has an 18-1-1 win-draw-loss (10

KOs) record while Donaire is 13-1 (8 KOs).

Thai tormentor of Manny's brood KOs another Filipino

INTERNATIONAL Boxing Federation Pan Pacific featherweight champ Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym proved his win over Bobby Pacquiao was no fluke as he demolished another Filipino fighter, Pedro Malco, in the fifth round yesterday of their scheduled 12-round in Bangkok, Thailand.

Fahprakorb used a mean right straight to

break the nose of Malco, who saved himself from further damage and surrendered.

It was Fahprakorb's 48th win in 51 fights against 3 losses, with 30 stoppages. Last Feb. 18, Rakkiatgym used a single punch to Bobby Pacquiao's ribcage to stop the Filipino in the ninth round in Pattaya, Thailand.

Salven L. Lagumbay

Fajardo retains billiards post

POC not yet ready to recognize new board

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ERNIE Fajardo was given a fresh mandate as president of the troubled National Snookers and Billiards Congress of the Philippines yesterday.

The other officials picked during the meeting held at the Philippine Columbian Association were Yen Makabenta as chair, Bong Ilagan as secretary general, Joanna Yuchengco-Dy as treasurer, Julius Medea as auditor and Romeo "Boy" Togonon as PRO.

Fajardo said Makabenta and Putch Puyat were elevated as members of the new executive board on Feb. 28.

There are reports, however, that the Philippine Olympic Committee may not sanction the election because it had earlier called for a status quo to review the NSBC constitution and by-laws.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco added that since the groups of Fajardo and Quini de Tagle, secretary general of the old board, are fighting for authority in the association, the contending parties will have to elevate the issue first to the POC arbitration committee.

Others named to the expanded NSBC board were Tony Barranda, Mahar Mangahas, Sebastian Chua, Jimmy Chongco, Jonathan Sy and billiards superstar Efren "Bata" Reyes.

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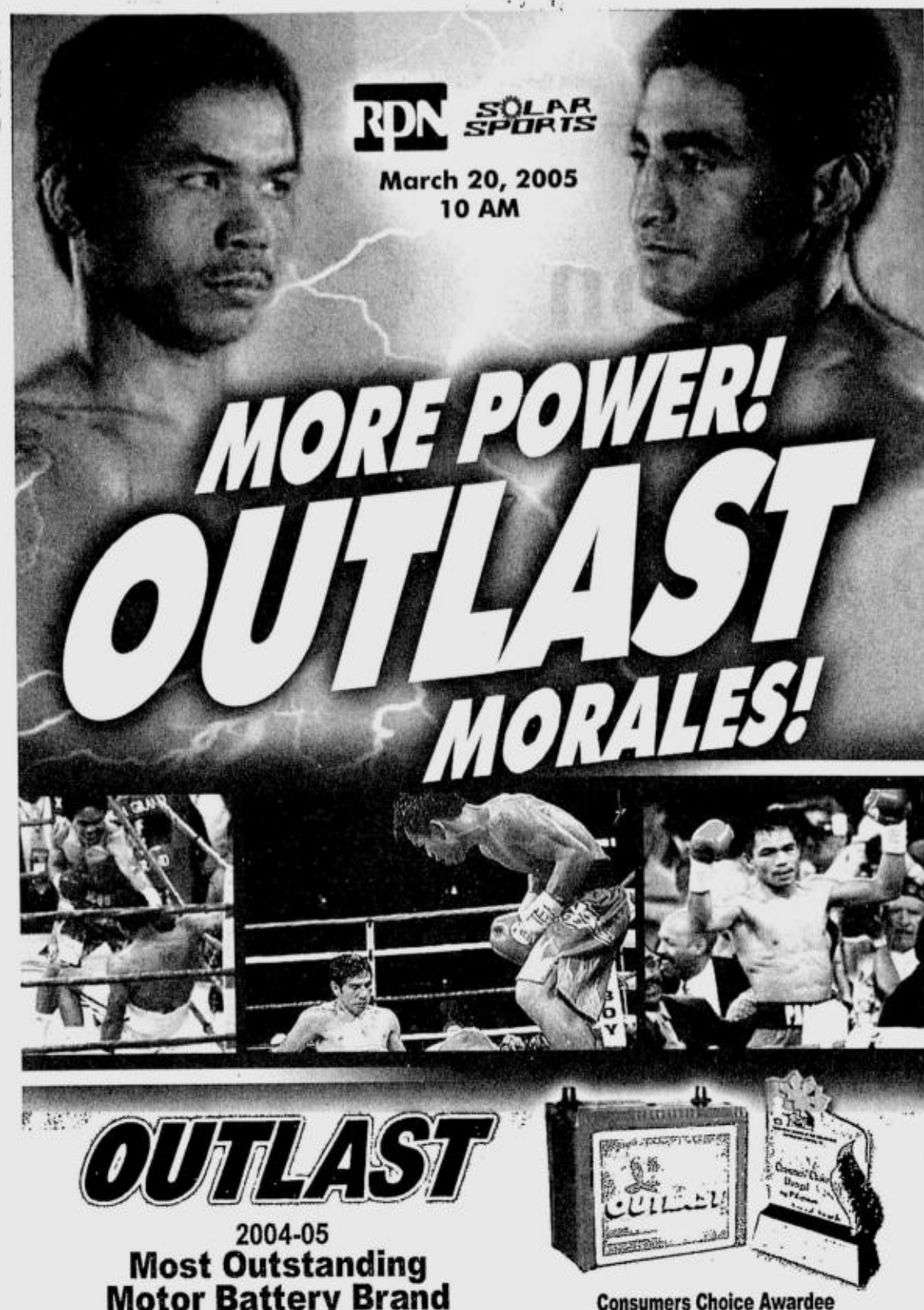
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Hermie's secret prediction; Tac's commendable move

ONE MORE night (*isang tulong na lang*) and we have with us the supposed sports blockbuster of the year.

I refer to the Pacquiao-Morales fight set for tomorrow (Saturday in the US), in the 130-lb, super featherweight division in which nothing is at stake but prestige and honor for both boxers.

Manny Pacquiao, our hero the last five years or so, remains the favorite to beat Erik Morales of Tijuana, Mexico, at the MGM Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada.

I have yet to see, hear, a Filipino say Pacquiao will lose.

Either an anti-Pacquiao thinks he could be lynched by Pacquiao fanatics or be branded a traitor if he comes out in the open.

The experience of Hermie Rivera is still fresh in the mind.

Back in 2003, Hermie Rivera, who as manager produced two Filipino world champions in Luisito Espinosa and Morris East, picked Marco Antonio Barrera to defeat Manny Pacquiao.

Hermie and I, together with Ed Picson and Quinto Henson, were then in the TV panel of Solar Sports covering the Pacquiao-Barrera fight.

Openly, Hermie declared his choice of Barrera. I chose Pacquiao as I had always done. Ed and Quinto withheld their picks.

When Pacquiao won—by an 11th round TKO—Ed and I immediately saw ourselves getting flooded with text messages, mostly critical of Hermie.

Said one text message: "Where's the address of Hermie Rivera? A hired arsonist is on his way to burn his house."

Said another: "Hermie Rivera should stick to what he does best: Manage boxers."

Said yet another: "What will Hermie Rivera predict next, the weather?"

Boxing is cruel. Just one mistake, you die.

That is why when Hermie Rivera wrote me a letter early this week saying he has no prediction in the Pacquiao-Morales fight, I was hardly surprised.

Must be that he wants to avoid the trauma-infected backlash of the Pacquiao-Barrera fight in 2003.

But just between you and me, fellas, I know that Hermie Rivera is for Morales, whose record of 47-2 with 34 knockouts (not 38) is as awesome as Pacquiao's 39-2-2, win-loss-draw card with 31 KOs.

Unlike Pacquiao whose two setbacks were by KOs, Morales has never been knocked out and the Mexican's twin defeats were merely on points against Barrera.

If Morales wins—God forbid—Hermie Rivera might just come out openly and sud-

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza



denly brag about his secret prediction.

That, too, wouldn't be a surprise—if it should happen at all.

The decision of NBC president Tac Padilla to put the National Basketball Conference under the umbrella of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) was a good move.

For one, it was in accordance with the accepted norm of existence of any basketball group, which is to give due respect at all times to the officially recognized body handling basketball affairs in the country—the BAP.

For another, any sane and sensible person will tell you that the BAP is the only official authority that is recognized internationally by the Olympic movement through the Fiba (World Basketball Federation). To dispute that would be like saying the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has no say in the staging of the Olympic Games once in four years.

That is why when commissioner Eala finally opened the PBA doors for a meeting of the minds between the PBA and BAP through BAP secretary general Graham Lim, paving the way for a signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the two bodies, it was the best thing that ever happened to basketball since the invention of the three-point shot.

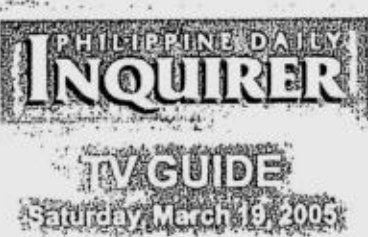
I'm just wondering up to now: Whatever happened to those bunch of guys trying to put up what they called the "Superbody" in basketball in their stupid bid to undermine the BAP?

Simply put, what they did was all bark but no bite.

Ah, but the sporting world is also peopled by fools masquerading as geniuses.

The funny thing is, there will always be suckers out there willing to submit, and falling prey, to the machinations of the fake in our midst. I can only commiserate with them.

FASTBREAK. Belated birthday greetings to DOTC Secretary Larry "Primo" Mendoza (March 16), who is also an NGAP director. Incidentally, the NGAP's national clubs council meeting yesterday at Aguilardo was a smashing success, what with the delegates issuing a unanimous call for golf unity in the entire archipelago.



TV GUIDE
Saturday, March 19, 2005

SINO ANG BABANGGA SA GINEBRA?




2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
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Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat

TUWING HUWEBES pagkatapos ng American Idol

Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado

Dito lang sa



Aces finally break the ice

GAME TODAY
(Bataan People's Center, Balanga)
6:15 p.m.—Red Bull vs Purefoods

By June Navarro

COACH Tim Cone finally flashed a thin smile.

Cone's sudden change of aura came after Alaska scored a breakthrough win over Shell, 88-82, last night in the 2005 Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Cune-ta Astrodome.

Before the victory that snapped the Turbo Chargers' two-game roll, Cone and the Aces were becoming used to wearing long faces after starting the import-laced conference with three straight losses.

This time around, Jeffrey Cariaso and Brandon Cablay pulled the Aces from the brink of a fourth one by hitting key baskets at a time Shell was unloading a final charge.

Cablay's hit two three-pointers that broke Shell's momentum while Cariaso delivered the final blow with a huge jumper and a pair of charities to make it 84-80 for the Aces with just 30 seconds remaining.

Cariaso finished with 30 points after going 9-of-19 from the field and converting all of his 12 free throws while Brandon Cablay added 18 for the Aces, who got decent numbers from Leon Derrick's for the first time.

Derrick's had 15 points and 16 rebounds on a night Alaska had almost made up its mind of tapping a new import. Team sources bared the Aces already have a reinforcement in mind.

"I don't want to talk about it," said Cone.

In the second game, Barangay Ginebra pocketed victory No. 2 in three starts after nipping Coca-Cola, 86-83, in overtime.

The Tigers dropped to 1-3.

The Aces played almost out of rhythm but were lucky the Turbo Chargers were a pace slower throughout. The Aces overhauled a seven-point deficit in the second quarter and took a 59-50 lead at the end of the third primarily due to the Turbo Chargers' anemic performance.



ALASKA'S Bong Hawkins drives off Shell's Wesley Wilson during the game last night.

RYAN LIM

The scores:

First Game:

ALASKA 88—Cariaso 30, Cablay 18, Derrick's 15, Alford 9, Huganathan 6, Hawkins 5, Padilla 3, Thoss 2, Wilson 0, Tejada 0.
SHELL 82—Wilson 35, Dela Cruz 12, Mamaril 10, Yap 10, Tubid 6, Alvarez 4, Calaguio 4, Jackson 1, Sotto 0, Cruz 0, Sta Maria 0.

Quarters: 14-21, 31-32, 59-50, 88-82.

Second Game:

GINEBRA 86—Elisma 33, Capulao 18, Salvacion 11, Santos 10, Dimaunahan 5, Seigle 4, Menk 3, Adducul 2, Echavez 0.

COCA-COLA 83—Arigo 27, Peek 20, Richards 10, Abarrientos 10, Singson 9, Junio 4, Reavis 3, Bacani 0, Antonio 0.
Quarters: 26-14, 41-34, 66-58, 73-73, 86-83.

Velo Challenge gets under way today at Amoranto

TRACK cycling comes alive beginning today at the newly refurbished Amoranto Velodrome in Quezon City with the staging of the First Philippine Velo Challenge.

Bemedalled SEAG veteran Paterno Curtan, the acknowledged spiritual leader of the national team, heads the Elite men's cast.

Co-presented by the First Gentleman's Foundation, Air21 and Tour Pilipinas of Lito Alvarez, the Velo Challenge is a 10-race day meet geared at reviving velodrome cycling and at preparing the national riders for the 23rd Southeast Asian Games in November.

Officials from the Philippine Sports Commission, the Philippine Olympic Committee and the sanctioning PhilCycling, headed by president and Customs Commissioner Bert Lina and chair Antonio Cruz, are expected at the 8:30 a.m. opening ceremonies.

There will also be races in the Women, Juniors (under-18), Executives, Masters and Veterans in the event also principally supported by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and backed by Isuzu D-Max, Sharp Phils., San Miguel Corp., dzSR Sports Radio, Vittoria Tires, 93.9 ifm, RMN 558 and Intrasports.

The cyclists will race under teams Maynila of Mayor Lito Atienza and Masco chair Ali Atienza, Tagaytay International Convention Center of Mayor Bambol Tolentino, Puerto Princesa of Mayor Edward Hagedorn, Quezon City of Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Wescor Transformer Corp. of Cruz and Elitir Bike Shop of mountain bike head Leo Magaway.

Quezon City, which has adopted the national cycling team at the Amoranto Sports Complex through Administrator Andy Apostol, is also supporting the Velo Challenge.

Team confusion serious ...

From page A25

lied when a diluted eye solution, a lot lighter, was applied on his eye. Six centiliters of blood were also taken for HIV check purposes.

If it's any consolation, Nazario, whom Pacquiao continues to call Pop, chanced upon the famous fighter on the ground floor the other day.

Pacquiao rushed to Nazario and hugged his

trusted former handler:

Pacquiao definitely wanted to have more of Nazario around him. But he no longer seemed in control, if not totally lost.

There's a strong likelihood Nazario and Pacquiao, inseparable before, would be reunited again in today's official weigh-in.

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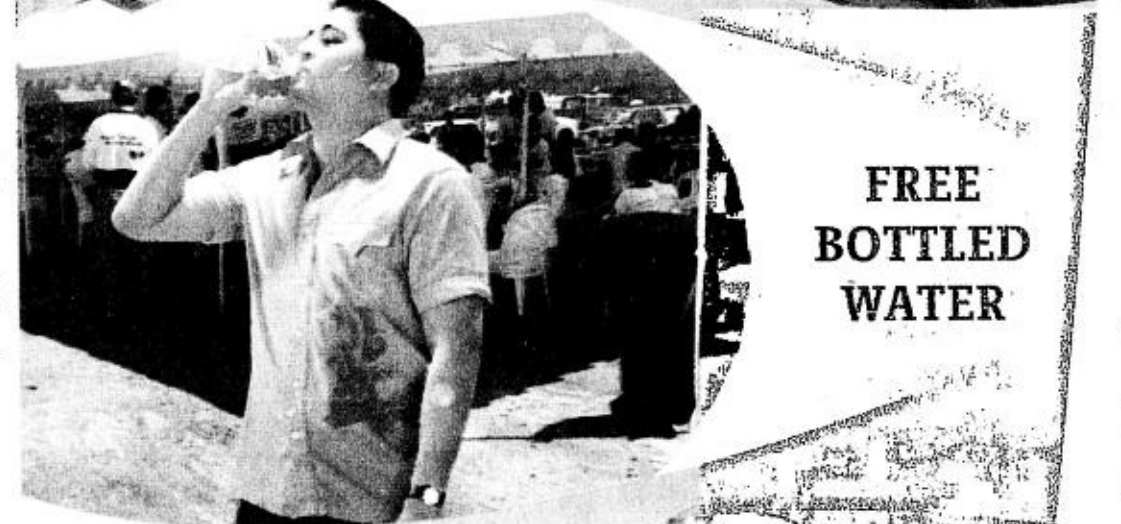
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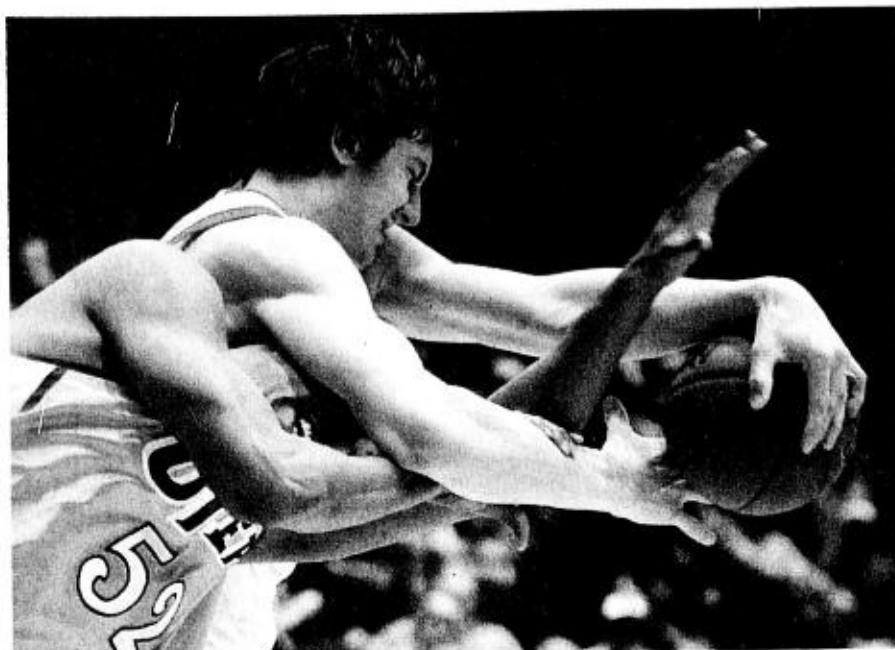
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MARCH Madness, the US collegiate season's biggest show, opens in a bruising tangle of arms as University of Utah center Andrew Bogut and University of El Paso-Texas center Will Kimble (52) fight tooth and nail for the loose ball during their NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship knockout match at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. **REUTERS**

Baseball, McGwire wilt under congress probe

WASHINGTON—Baseball wriggled under a congressional microscope for nearly 11 hours Thursday, poked, prodded and dissected by a House committee that scolded the sport for its role in what has become an unrelenting steroid scandal.

The American pastime has come to Capitol Hill many times before, but this was an extraordinary appearance, replete with some of the sport's biggest current and former stars raising their right hands and being sworn in under oath—with a national television audience watching.

In the end, the lasting images were retired slugger Mark McGwire dodging questions about whether his career had been steroid-fueled; House members pounding baseball officials over what they deemed a soft policy on performance-enhancing drugs, and the leaders of the sport insisting that committee members were woefully uninformed about their revised plan and that the government should back off and let the 2-week-old policy work.

Perhaps the overarching theme, though, was one that called baseball's morality into question, with players asked whether they believed using steroids constituted cheating and whether they saw themselves as role models to America's youth.

"We have every right to be concerned that the national pastime and all that it represents has been threatened by the selfish actions of a few," said Sen. Jim Bunning, a Hall of Fame pitcher who was invited by the committee as its first witness.

Damaged

Bunning opened the proceedings before an often-packed room that included the families of three young men who killed themselves in the wake of steroid use, a string of medical experts and the most media to attend a hearing since the Clinton impeachment proceedings.

Though the sport's officials took the most pointed hits—"Baseball's hierarchy balked at implementing a steroid policy," said Rep. Den-

nis Kucinich—the slugger McGwire might have come away the most damaged.

A former Oakland A's star who as a St. Louis Cardinal captivated the nation by hitting 70 home runs during his 1998 home run duel with Sammy Sosa, McGwire had been reluctant even to appear at the hearing, showing up only after he had been subpoenaed.

He began his testimony with an opening statement during which he nearly started crying.

"First and foremost, my heart goes out to every parent whose son or daughter were victims of steroid use," he said. "I hope these hearings can prevent other families from suffering."

Integrity

He also said he would do anything to help and suggested he would serve as a spokesperson to discourage kids from using steroids.

Shortly thereafter, though, McGwire made it clear he did not intend to answer the question on everyone's mind: Had he ever used the drugs?

He said that on advice of his attorney, he could not answer those questions without "jeopardizing my friends, my family or myself."

And so began a back-and-forth with committee members in which McGwire repeatedly stated that he would not be answering questions about his past and that he hoped something positive, not negative, could come from the hearing.

The most direct exchange came when he was questioned by Missouri Democratic Rep. William Clay, who, after reminding McGwire that a section of a Missouri freeway is named after him, asked, "Can you look at these children with a straight face? Can you say you played the game with honesty and integrity?"

"I'm not going to go into my past," McGwire responded.

During the 1998 season, it was discovered that McGwire was using the steroid precursor androstenedione, which was legal and not banned by baseball at the time. *New York Times News Service*

Federer, Sharapova sail into Pacific semifinals

INDIAN WELLS, California—Wimbledon champions Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova sailed straight into the semifinals of the Pacific Life Open on Thursday with similar two-set victories.

Federer chalked up his 24th win in 25 matches this year by thrashing Germany's Nicolas Kiefer, 6-4, 6-1, while women's third seed Sharapova blasted France's Mary Pierce, 6-4, 6-3.

Sharapova set up a semifinal showdown with world No. 1 Lindsay Davenport, a 7-6, 6-0 winner over Frenchwoman Nathalie Dechy.

"It's like he's Mr. Perfect and nothing's going wrong for him at this point," Sharapova said referring to Federer.

"He's so talented and just plays so loose. It seems like he's playing without any effort, plays always by instinct."

Federer will play Argentina's Guillermo Canas, who ended the run of last year's finalist Tim Henman with a 7-6, 7-5 victory.

Sharapova won the battle of the big hitters by knocking out twice grand slam champion Pierce.

The 30-year-old Pierce, who had beaten Sharapova at last year's US Open, tried to match her opponent blow for blow. But the teenager pulled through by hitting more accurate shots.

"I think I learn a lot from losses and they make me a lot tougher," Sharapova said.

"I was very disappointed [at the US Open], and I went out there and I worked really hard."

Sharapova leads Davenport, 2-0, in their head-to-head.

A victory in Indian Wells would put

Huskies claim first victory as top dogs

BOISE, Idaho—Brandon Roy scored 17 points to lead a balanced Washington attack, and the Huskies opened their first NCAA Tournament as a top seed with an 88-77 victory over Montana.

Tre Simmons added 15 points, Will Conroy chipped in 12 and Bobby Jones netted 11 for Washington (28-5), which was rewarded with a surprising top seed in the Albuquerque bracket after capturing the Pac-10 Tournament title.

Jamaal Williams was also in double figures for Washington with 10 points and star guard Nate Robinson contributed nine.

The Huskies will next take on eighth-seeded Pacific in Saturday's second round after the Tigers advanced earlier with a 79-71 win over Pittsburgh.

In the earlier game, Christian Maraker and David Doubley each scored 17 points, as Pacific ran out to a big lead and held on for a victory over Pittsburgh.

Pacific was rewarded with an eighth seed in the Albuquerque bracket this year and will next face Washington.

"Being here last year and knowing what it takes to get a victory definitely helped this team," said Doubley.

Meanwhile in Cleveland, Chris Paul netted a game-high 20 points and grabbed six rebounds to lead Wake Forest past a pesky Chattanooga team, 70-54, at the Wolstein Center.

Justin Gray added 14 points for the Demon Deacons (27-5), who are seeded second in the Albuquerque bracket and will face West Virginia.

Also at Cleveland, Tyrone Sully's go-ahead dunk with 2.4 seconds remaining lifted West Virginia over Creighton, 63-61.

Sully finished with 12 points, while Kevin Pittsnogle's 17 points led the way for the seventh-seeded Mountaineers (22-10), who will face Wake Forest on Saturday.

Over in Tucson, Arizona, Adam Morrison scored 27 points and Gonzaga withstood a game effort from underdog Winthrop to record a 74-64 victory at the McKale Center.

Morrison made 12-of-19 field goal attempts and netted 17 of his points in the second-half to lead the Bulldogs, the third seed out of the Albuquerque bracket, into Saturday's second round.

Ronald Ross had 28 points and eight rebounds to propel Texas Tech to a 78-66 victory over UCLA.

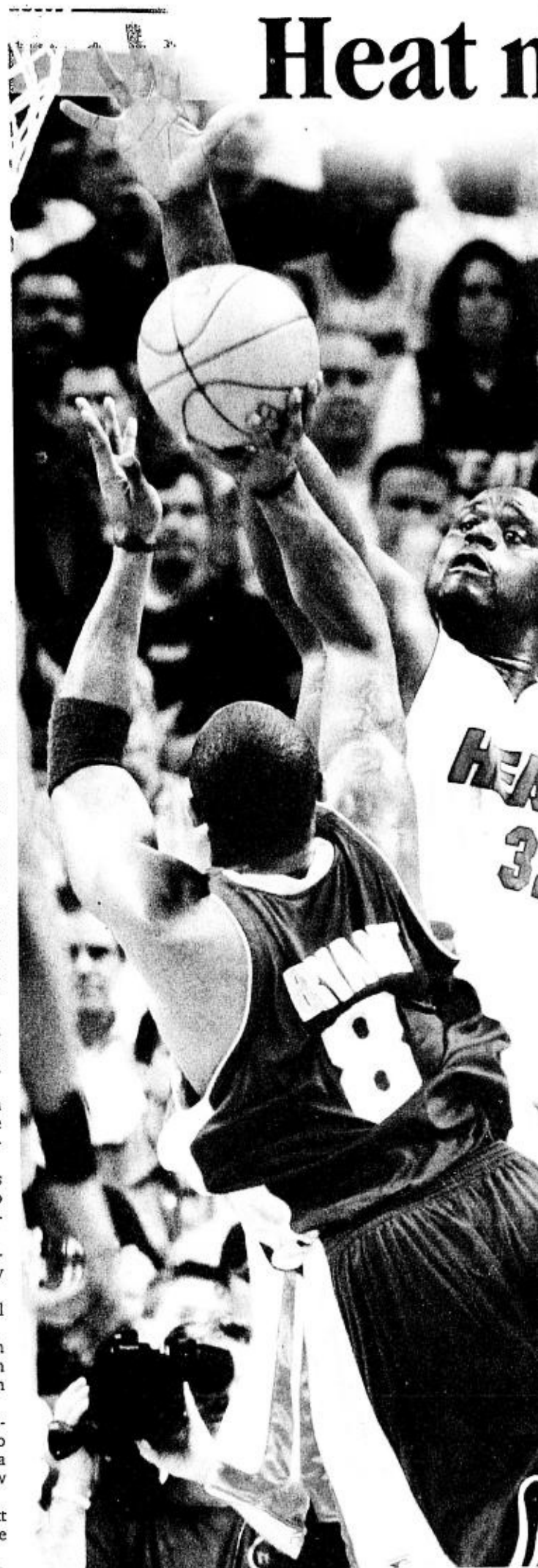
Texas Tech (21-10), the seventh seed, will meet third-seed Gonzaga.

Dijon Thompson netted 22 points and Josh Shipp finished with 13 for UCLA (18-11), which was making its first appearance in the 65-team field since 2002.

Meanwhile, Utah escaped with a 60-54 victory over the University of Texas-El Paso thanks to a brilliant bit of defense by Tim Drisdorn and a critical rebound from an exhausted Andrew Bogut.

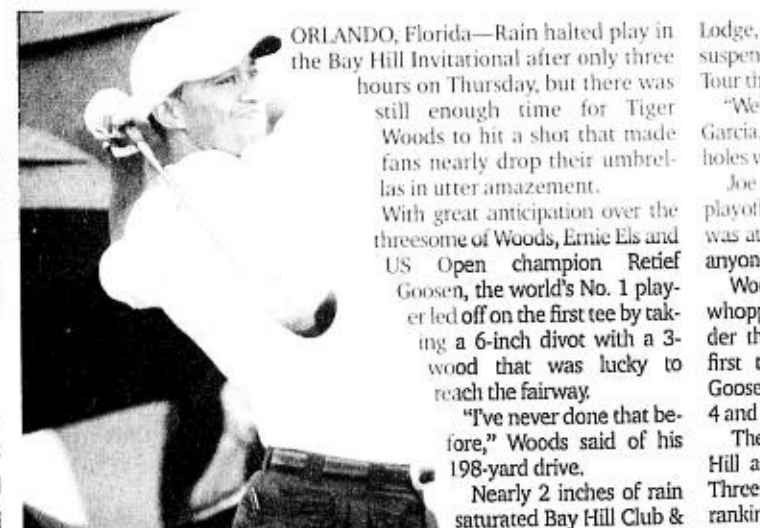
Utah (28-5) has won 23 of its last 25 and next plays Oklahoma in the second round of the Austin Regional.

Bogut played all 40 minutes and had 24 points, 11 rebounds and four blocked shots. **Reuters**



SHAQUILLE O'Neal (32) rises to foil the shot of that familiar No. 8, who used

Rain postpones royal



WOODS: I've never done that before. **REUTERS**

ORLANDO, Florida—Rain halted play in the Bay Hill Invitational after only three hours on Thursday, but there was still enough time for Tiger Woods to hit a shot that made fans nearly drop their umbrellas in utter amazement.

With great anticipation over the threesome of Woods, Ernie Els and US Open champion Retief Goosen, the world's No. 1 player led off on the first tee by taking a 6-inch divot with a 3-wood that was lucky to reach the fairway.

"I've never done that before," Woods said of his 198-yard drive.

Nearly 2 inches of rain saturated Bay Hill Club &

Lodge, causing suspension of play. Tour this year. "We're Garcia, who holes who Joe Og playoff at was at 3 anyone pl Woods whopping der throu first two Goosen hi 4 and was The No Hill amor Three of ranking an

Phil gets

ORLANDO, Florida—Phil Mickelson will be sharing a locker at Augusta National with Charles Coody, another Masters champion who knows something about finishing strong to win a green jacket.

Coody won the 1971 Masters, rallying from a two-shot deficit against Johnny Miller on the back nine with birdies on the 15th and 16th holes. He won by two over Miller and Jack Nicklaus, finishing at 9-under 279.

Mickelson also trailed Ernie Els by two shots at one point on the back nine last year, but birdied five of his last seven holes, including an 18-footer on the 18th to finish at 279 for a one-shot victory.

Melt Lakers, sweep season series

Mavericks, Warriors triumph

MIAMI—Dwyane Wade scored 27 points, O'Neal had 25 points and 12 rebounds, and Keyon Dooling scored eight of his season-high 17 points in the fourth quarter Thursday to help the Miami Heat beat the Los Angeles Lakers, 102-89.

It was the 11th straight win and a single-season record 14th straight at home for Miami (51-16), which moved nine games ahead of Detroit in the Eastern Conference standings and within percentage points of San Antonio (49-15) for the league's best record.

"We just look at this game as another game," said O'Neal, who enjoyed a season sweep at his former teammate's expense.

"We wanted to stay focused and our guys did a beautiful job of not letting anything enter into the locker room that would break our focus."

Bryant had 21 points in the first half for Los Angeles, but missed his first nine shots after halftime and finished with 26 points on 8-for-23 shooting.

Chuck Atkins had 23 for the Lakers, who dropped their third straight and fell 1 1/2 games behind Denver for the final playoff spot in the Western Conference.

Miami outscored Los Angeles, 33-22, in the fourth quarter. A 7-0 burst midway through the quarter put the Heat up 84-73 with 7:03 left, and Miami wasn't seriously threatened again.

"We played well for 36 minutes tonight," Lakers coach Frank Hamblen said.

"Unfortunately, the game is 48."

Mavericks 98, Trail Blazers 94

In Dallas, Josh Howard had 21 points and 11 rebounds as the Mavericks overcame an off night by top scorer Dirk Nowitzki to beat Portland.

Howard missed Thursday morning's shootaround because of the stomach flu, but felt well enough to start.

He scored 10 of Dallas' last 20 points, including a critical 3-pointer to break a 90-90 tie with 1:59 left.

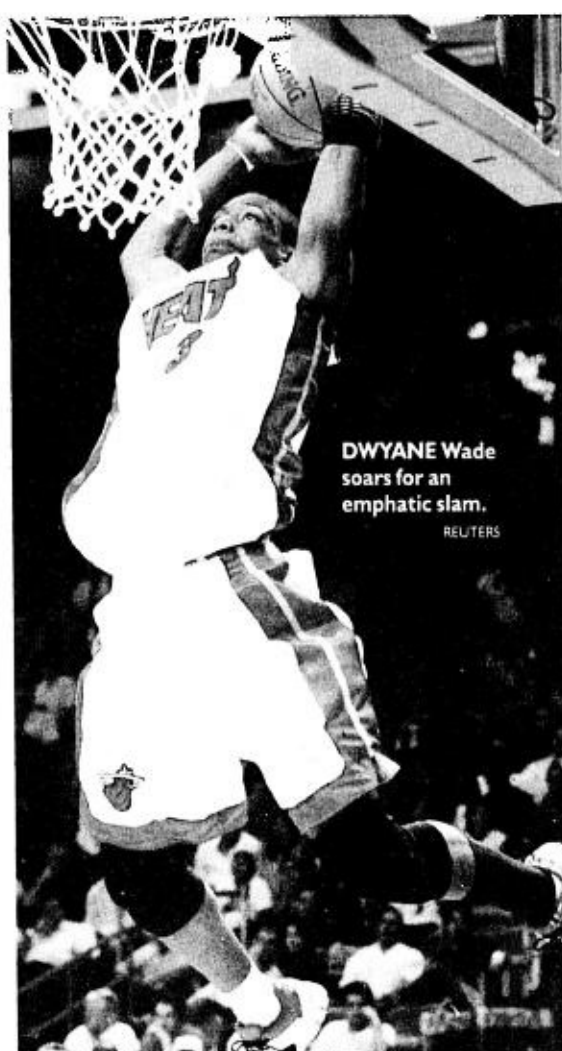
Michael Finley had 17 points and Marquis Daniels added 16 for the Mavericks, who had lost three of their previous five home games.

Shareef Abdur-Rahim and Damon Stoudamire had 20 points each for the lottery-bound Trail Blazers, who've lost three in a row and nine of 10.

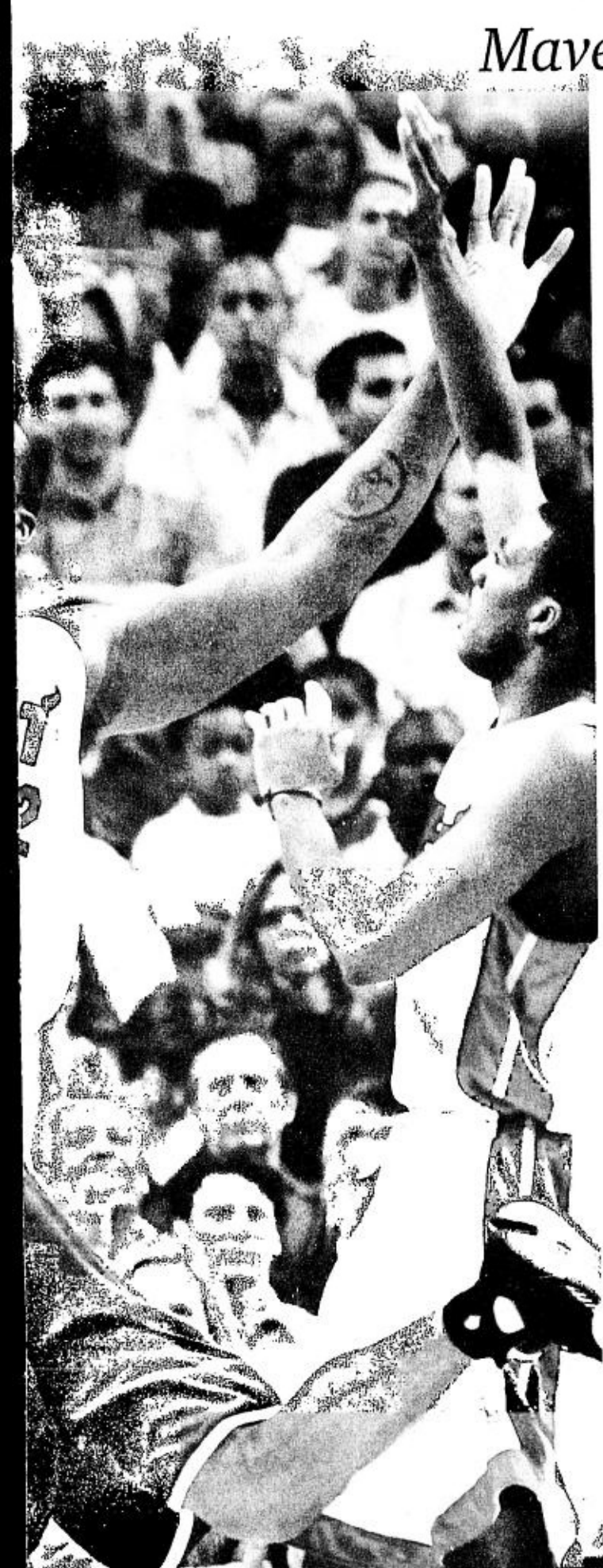
Warriors 100, Kings 97

In Oakland, California, Jason Richardson hit a long jump shot with 27.1 seconds left and finished with 40 points to lead the Warriors over Sacramento.

After Richardson's basket, the Kings missed four shots, including 3-point attempts by Mike Bibby and Peja Stojakovic just before the final buzzer. AP



DWYANE Wade soars for an emphatic slam. REUTERS



to be a sidekick in many a championship conquest. REUTERS

Kobe rams into another brick wall

MIAMI—As sure as Shaquille O'Neal called it before their Christmas showdown, Kobe Bryant took the court again Thursday night at American Airlines Arena and ran smack into a brick wall.

It came not in the form of the 7-foot-1, 325-pound center like everyone expected, however. Instead, Bryant suffered through a second-half shooting slump that left the Lakers dead in their tracks and doomed to another defeat.

Bryant missed 10 of 11 shots after halftime, raising a host of issues, as the Lakers faded in the fourth quarter and lost, 102-89, to the Miami Heat. It was the third consecutive double-digit loss for the Lakers on this trip and 11th victory in a row for the Heat.

Since he scored 21 points in the fourth quarter Saturday and hit a last-second shot to beat the Charlotte Bobcats, Bryant has gone just 3 for 28 (10.7 percent) in the second half of losses to Washington, Philadelphia and now Miami.

"He knows how to get through it better than anybody," Caron Butler said. "We've just got to continue to play hard, do the little things."

Before hitting a 3-pointer with 1 minute, 38 seconds remaining and the Lakers trailing by 16, Bryant had missed his first nine shots of the second half. It was a fitting end on a night in which Bryant couldn't even connect with O'Neal on a pregame fist-bump.

O'Neal finished with 25 points and 12 rebounds, saying afterward: "It was a good team against a so-

so team." Dwyane Wade led all scorers with 27 and Bryant had 26 on 8-for-23 shooting in a marathon 46 minutes.

The Lakers (32-32) fell 1 1/2 games behind Denver for the Western Conference's eighth and final playoff spot.

Numerous explanations for Bryant's night were thrown around afterward. Interim coach Frank Hamblen was asked if his superstar guard was tired after a season of playing major minutes and doing everything for the post-O'Neal Lakers.

"He missed 14 games," Hamblen said, referring to the month Bryant spent on the injured list, "so he didn't work that hard for 14 games. I know we play him a lot of minutes but you have to ask him."

There also was the match-up with Wade, and whether Bryant became consumed by it. Bryant came up barking in the opening minute, when Wade blocked him from behind as Bryant tried for continuation after Damon Jones fouled

him on the fastbreak.

The two later exchanged words just before the end of the first half as Wade grew upset with Bryant's hands-on defense.

"I pretty much told him a lot of stuff," Wade said. "I don't want to get into it."

To start the third quarter, Wade delivered a windmill block of Bryant's first shot, sending the Lakers' guard tumbling to the floor. But Bryant said the night was not about him and Wade, or for that matter, him and O'Neal.

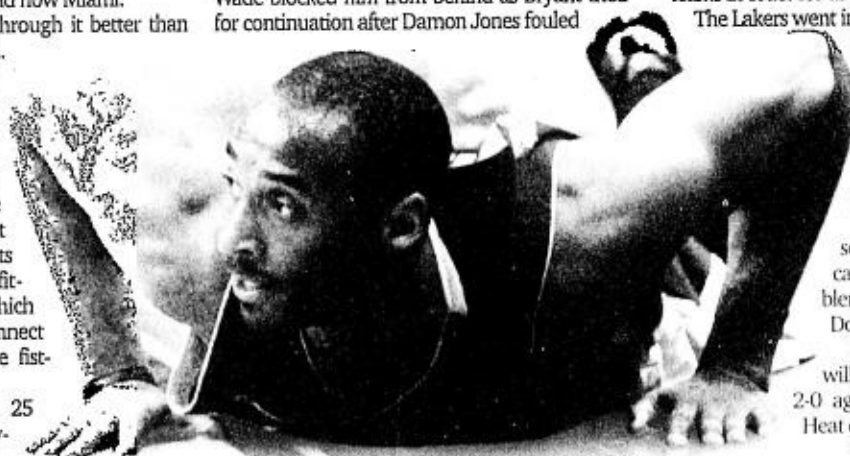
"It's not about an individual match-up whatsoever," said Bryant, who attributed his troubles to facing endless double teams playing in the backcourt of the triangle offense. "It's about us trying to get into the playoffs and them doing a great job."

Hamblen didn't sound so sure, saying: "Sometimes great players like to go at each other. He knows he has to have a big night against good teams in order for us to be successful."

The Lakers went into the fourth quarter trailing 69-67 but fell behind by 11 points not even five minutes in. Wade hit two jumpers and Keyon Dooling scored eight of his season-high 17 points in the quarter.

"Every night we pick out somebody to have either their career or season high," Hamblen said, and Thursday it was Dooling.

With the Heat win, O'Neal will end his first season in Miami 2-0 against his former team. The Heat defeated the Lakers, 104-102, last Christmas. New York Times News Service



THE NEW Lakers ring leader falls flat anew against Miami. REUTERS

Battle for No. 1 spot

Using the sixth weather-related in 12 events on the US PGA tour.

getting used to it," said Sergio Garcia who was 3 under through eight holes.

Alvie, who lost in a three-man playoff at the Honda Classic last week, also under through 13 holes, the most in the field.

managed to make par after that tee shot on No. 1, and was 2 under through eight holes. Els bogeyed his 10th hole and was 1 over, while Garcia teed out of bounds on No. 1 at 2 over.

1 ranking is up for grabs at Bay Hill, where Woods, Els and Vijay Singh are the top five players in the world in the same group for the first

two rounds, although they hardly looked like world-class players.

Especially Woods. The last time he used that new 3-wood in competition, he caught it a little thin on the 12th hole at the Ford Championship and still carried it nearly 300 yards to set up an eagle that led to his victory over Phil Mickelson two weeks ago in Miami.

This one looked as if it went 300 yards into the clouds.

"I didn't know Retief and I intimidated him like that," Els said with a laugh.

Woods normally has an 8-iron into the green, but his yardage was 251 yards to the flag. The shot required a 3-wood to reach the green, but pride got in the way.

"I just couldn't," Woods said. "I managed to slap a 2-iron down there in the bunker and got up-and-down."

AP

his Augusta locker

Masters champions have their own locker room atop the clubhouse, and most of them share a locker. Mickelson returned to Augusta National in October and saw the Champions Locker Room for the first time, but his locker had not been assigned.

Coody said he watched Mickelson's victory and was happy to share a locker for the April 7-10 Masters.

"I'm not around him very much," Coody said from Newport Beach, California, where he is playing a Champions Tour event. "The only regular tour event I'm at is Augusta. And with him not having won before, he wasn't up in our locker

room. I imagine he'll be up there a little bit now."

Coody, 67, owns Diamondback Golf Club in Abilene, Texas, and continues to play a full schedule on the Champions Tour. He last won in the 1998 Legends of Golf with Dale Douglass. Assuming his health is good, he plans to play in the Masters for two more years.

Coody recalled earning \$25,000 for his victory in 1971, when the total purse was just under \$200,000. Mickelson earned \$1.17 million last year from a total prize money of nearly \$6.3 million.

"Maybe he'll leave a little money in there, even some petty cash," Coody said with a laugh. AP

Magic banish coach amid losing skid

ORLANDO, Florida—Johnny Davis was fired on Thursday as coach of the Orlando Magic, which has lost six straight NBA games and is on the verge of falling from playoff contention.

Assistant Chris Jent was named interim coach. "We work in a bottom-line business," general manager John Weisbrod said in a statement. "It is our responsibility to do everything possible to create the best opportunity for success."

Davis was dismissed along with assistant coach Ron Ekker hours after Wednesday's 110-102 road loss to the Los Angeles Clippers, dropping the Magic to 31-33 and leaving it tied with Philadelphia for the final Eastern Conference playoff spot.

The team, in the middle of a West Coast road swing, plays on Friday at Seattle.

Davis told the Orlando Sentinel he was "surprised and disappointed" by the firing with just 18 games left in the season and the club still trying to make the playoffs.

"It caught me completely off guard," Davis told the newspaper.

Jent, who spent two seasons in the NBA and was a member of the 1994 champion Houston Rockets, became a Magic assistant this season and is a head coach for the first time. He was promoted over assistant Paul Westhead, who coached the Los Angeles Lakers to the 1980 title and later coached the Denver Nuggets. AP

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Delasin, Rosales within striking distance

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, Arizona—Dorothy Delasin birdied the 18th hole to finish with a one-under-par 71 while Jennifer Rosales settled for a 72 at the start of the Safeway International Thursday.

The 25-year-old Delasin, who shot three birdies against two bogeys in her 36-35 card, was tied for 24th place with 18 others.

Rosales, winner of the season-opening SBS Open in Hawaii last month, had nines of 36-36 after matching two birdies with the same number of bogeys. She was deadlocked with 20 others in 42nd spot.

Delasin and Rosales had earlier teamed up for the Philippine team that

finished in a two-way with South Korea for second place behind Japan in the Women's World Cup last Feb. 14.

Jenny, who was not feeling well on the eve of the tournament, is back on the LPGA Tour after withdrawing in the first round of the MasterCard Classic in Mexico two weeks ago following an opening 74.

Sorenstam, who won that Mexico tourney and is the defending champion here, shot a 6-under 66 Thursday and stood just a stroke behind first-round leaders Lorena Ochoa of Mexico and Siew-Ai Lim of Malaysia.

Juli Inkster matched Sorenstam at 66, Karen Stupples had a 67, and Soo-Yun Kang, Sung Ah Yim and

Moira Dunn shot 68s. Paula Creamer, Beth Daniel, Candie Kung, Natalie Gulbis, Marcy Hart, Dawn Coe-Jones, Karrie Webb and Kim Williams had 69s.

Meanwhile, amateur sensation Michelle Wie was in danger of missing the cut after a 73.

Playing in the first group to tee off on the back nine, Wie lost her touch in the chilly morning air, dropping two strokes on the par-5 18th—the only hole on the course with a water hazard. Already 1 over after eight holes, the teen hooked her drive into the fairway-length pond, duplicated that with a 3-wood after a drop and had to get up and down from a bunker to salvage a dou-

ble-bogey 7.

"It was super cold," Wie said. "I couldn't even feel my hands, so the first nine I had absolutely no feel of my putts."

The Hawaii native missed the cut in all three LPGA events she entered in 2002, but has made 14 of 15 since then, with the 2003 Jamie Farr Classic the only exception.

But things might not be too bleak for Wie. She opened with a 72 last year in this tournament, then recovered with a 67 and ended up tying for 19th.

"I'll try to make a lot of birdies tomorrow and try and make a lot more putts," she said. "Try to be more in the fairway."



ROSALAS: Ailing but doing well.

Miñoza in, Que exits from TLC Classic tilt

SANYA, Hainan, China -- Frankie Miñoza lost his sizzling touch overnight, settling for a one-under-par 71 Friday to fall in the middle of the pack after two rounds of the \$1 million TCL Classic here.

The top Filipino shotmaker, who opened up with a 66 Thursday, went through a roller coaster of a round that dropped him into a tie for 38th place at 7-under 137, seven strokes behind new leader Alejandro Quiroz of Mexico.

Angelo Que, the other Filipino in the event jointly sanctioned by the Asian Tour and the European Tour, fell by the wayside after submitting a horrendous 76 for a 144 aggregate.

The winner of last year's Vietnam Open, Que couldn't approximate the form that gave him a 70 Thursday. He hit the turn at four over with a double bogey and two bogeys and threw away birdies on the 11th and 12th with another double bogey on the 17th.

With the field coming up with another birdie binge at the scenic Yalong Bay Golf Club, Quiroz shot another 65 and grabbed a two-stroke lead with a 14-under 130 total.

Ryder Cup veteran Colin Montgomerie of Scotland matched that 65 and moved up to second place at 132 in a tie with fellow Ryder Cupper Paul Casey of England and Choi Gwang-soo of Korea.

Casey, who teamed up with Luke Donald to win the WGC-World Cup in Spain last year, shot a 68 after a 64 while Choi carded a 67.

Montgomerie, who won the TCL title when the event was last held in 2002, needs a lofty finish here to qualify for the US Masters, the year's first major, in April. At 54th, Colin has to break in the world's top 50 to make it to Augusta.

Miñoza, bidding to regain the Japan Tour card he lost due to poor play last season, rolled in five birdies with a broomhandle putter he's using for the first time in two years.

But he stumbled with five bogeys, two of them coming back-to-back that left him with a 36 on the back nine, where he started. Frankie needed birdies on the sixth and ninth to wind up with a 35 on the front side.

Two Taiwanese -- Lu Wen-teh and Lin Keng-chi -- were the other Asians in the top 10 list as they joined the big logjam at 133, just three off the lead.

Lu rallied with a 64 while Lin had a 67. Also in their group were Thomas Bjorn of Denmark (67), Johan Edfors of Sweden (69), Terry Pilkadaris of Australia (67) and Ivo Giner of Spain (66).

Chawalit Plaphol of Thailand, one of four co-leaders Thursday, came down to earth with a 70 and stood at 134 in a nine-way tie that included European Tour veterans Michael Campbell of New Zealand (66) and Paul McGinley of Ireland (69).

The scores: 130—Alejandro Quiroz, Mexico (65-65); 132—Choi Gwang-soo, SK (65-67), Colin Montgomerie, Scotland (67-65), Paul Casey, England (64-68); 133—Lu Wen-teh, Taiwan (69-64), Lin Keng-chi, Taiwan (66-67), Johan Edfors, Sweden (64-69), Thomas Bjorn, Sweden (66-67), Terry Pilkadaris, Australia (66-67), Ivo Giner, Spain (67-66); 134—Lin Wen-tang, Taiwan (70-64), Chawalit Plaphol, Thailand (64-70), Edward Loar, US (69-65), Steven Jeppesen, Sweden (68-66), Paul McGinley, Ireland (65-69), Michael Campbell, New Zealand (68-66), Mo Joong-kyung, SK (66-68).

DELARIARTE
lines himself up
for first pro title



Delariarte 4 up with another 68

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, Laguna—

Jherome Delariarte birdied

three of the first six holes and went on to shoot a second straight two-under-par 68 yesterday that boosted him to a solid four-stroke lead halfway through the money-rich The Country Club Invitational.

The 26-year-old, a member of the national team that placed third in the World Amateurs in 2002 but still winless as a pro, finished with five birdies against two bogeys and pulled away from the select field with a 136 total after two rounds.

Robert Pactolerin assembled the day's best round—a 67—to climb into a second place tie with Gerald Rosales and first-round co-leader Benjie Magada at 140.

Rosales, also a former Philippine Open winner like Pactolerin, shot a 71, while Magada sprayed his drives all over the exclusive par 35-35—72 course and was lucky to post a 72.

Cookie La'O, the third man in the logjam at the top after Day 1, wrestled with his putter all day to submit a 73, dropping into a tie for fourth with the favored Cassius Casas (72) and Carito Villaroman with 141s.

Villaroman checked in with the third and last sub-par round for the

day, a 69 capped by a 33 coming home to make the cut in this tournament for the first time in three years.

Delariarte cooled off after his sizzling start, taking two bogeys in a five-hole span from the seventh, before gunning down his last birdie on the 475-yard par-4 15th to put himself in prime position for the P1.1 million top prize.

He said the key to his round was hitting fairways and leaving himself with uphill putts to solve the unpredictable speed of the greens.

Scores soared as the winds started blowing, leaving some of the big names groping for form, especially defending champion Antonio Lascuña, who limped home with a second straight 73.

Lascuña, also the runner-up to Cassius Casas in 2003, had a 146 total, 10 off the pace in a three-way tie for 12th spot with Peter Miñoza (76) and Richard Sinfuego (73).

The burly Pactolerin, winner of the 1990 Philippine Open, rebounded from a 73 in the opening round with four birdies against a bogey in a late flight.

Pactolerin posted nines of 34-33, his only bogey coming on the 407-yard fourth hole when he overshot the green and left himself with an almost impossible downhill chip.

The top 21 scores made the weekend play, with pro-bound Juvic Pa-

gunsan failing to make the cut pegged at 150 on a countback.

Tonlits Asistio fired a 75 after a 69 Thursday and stood alone in 10th spot with a 144. The other amateur survivors were Jun Bernis (147-72) and Artemio Murakami (148-74).

The Scores:

136—J. Delariarte (68-68); 140—R. Pactolerin (73-67), G. Rosales (69-71), B. Magada (68-72); 141—C. Casas (69-72), C. Villaroman (72-69), C. La'O (68-73); 142—E. Salvador (70-72), D. Zarate (70-72), M. Pucay (71-71), 144—T. Asistio (A) (69-75); 145—R. Cabajar (71-74); 146—A. Lascuña (73-73), P. Minoza (70-76), R. Sinfuego (73-73).



PACTOLERIN: Still a threat

Puerto Princesa hosts 5th leg of kite festival

AFTER four successful legs in Dumaguete, Lingayen, Tacloban, and General Santos, the 15th Bear Brand Kitefest flies to Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. The fifth leg of the country's biggest and much-awaited kite festival will be held at the Palawan Sports Complex.

Thousands of pesos in prizes await the winners of the Palawan leg which has three categories: Flat, Geometric and Figure; and four age groups: Elementary Division for children aged 6-12

years old, high school division for participants aged 13-16 years old, college division for participants aged 17-21, and adults division for contestants ages 22 and above.

Other awards include the "Theme Kite Award" for the best flying kite to represent the province or city, the "Super Kite Award" for the biggest flying kite in the figure category and the "Saranggola ni Bear Brand Award."

1st RP kitefest taking off

KITE-FLYING hobbyists and enthusiasts will have the chance to showcase their creativity and craftsmanship this April as the First Philippine Kite Festival unfolds at Lot 2, City Center, of Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

The event, led by Orly Ongkingco of the Kite Association of the Philippines (KAP), will commence the inclusion of the Philippines in the Asean kitefest map.

"We envision the First Philippine Kite Festival to bring out the best of the Filipinos in kite flying, kite-making, aside from providing an avenue for them to spend their summer in a wholesome and enjoyable way," said Abby Reyes, events manager of the First Philippine Kitefest.

The kitefest would be held simultaneously in

Mandaue, Cebu, with the top qualifier from the regional leg earning a shot at bagging the top spot to be held on May 6 to 8 at the Global City.

Registration has been set on March 12 to 13, 19 to 20 and 26 to 27 for a minimum fee of P100. A general assembly and briefing of all participants will be held on April 2 to 3 prior to the official opening of the competition on April 9 beginning with the non-professional (Non-Pro) level.

The Non-Pro level is divided into two categories: the Kids Fun Fly, which caters to 13 years old and below (unassisted) as well as the Open Fun Fly which is open to all ages with any type of kite.

For details, call 9136404, 9129989 or 9129924 and look for Abby or Roma.

Puerto Rican great Ortiz to get Flash Elorde award

CARLOS Ortiz, who defended his lightweight crown against the late Gabriel "Flash" Elorde in 1964, will receive the prestigious Flash Elorde Memorial Award during rites at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel on March 30.

Ortiz, 68, won by technical knockout over Da Flash in the 14th round of their world title bout on Feb. 15, 1964, in Manila. It has been a tradition of the Elorde family to confer highest honors on a former opponent of the Filipino boxing legend during the Annual Elorde Sports Awards, now on its fifth year.

World champion Manny Pacquiao, considered

the greatest Filipino boxer of this generation, has been the unanimous choice for the Boxer of the Year award for the fourth straight year.

Johnny Elorde, son of Da Flash, said it took them weeks to locate the Puerto Rican, who reigned as world lightweight champ from 1962-68.

Like Elorde, who was the junior lightweight champion for seven years, the New York-based Ortiz has been elevated to the Hall of Fame.

Ortiz will be flying in, courtesy of the Elordes, with wife Mary Canals on March 25, the birthday anniversary of Da Flash, and will stay till April 5.



CHAMPS: University of Perpetual Help System-Dalta players and officials, led by EVP and Chancellor Dr. Ramon Cercado, celebrate their 59th National Students Basketball Championship victory.

Final Epson Cup leveling sessions start today

EPSON CUP 2 will hold its final leveling sessions this weekend at the Pioneer Badminton Center before the week-long meet kicks off next month.

Tournament director EG Lim will conduct the leveling session starting at 6 p.m. today and from 1-5 p.m. on Sunday with over a hundred badminton players expected to meet the final cut at the PBC on Pioneer Street in Mandaluyong City.

The event, sponsored by Shell, Wilson, Philippine Daily Inquirer,

Citibank, Apple Center, Konica (Photo Columbia), Mizuno, UNO Magazine, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, Yehey.com, PBN and Fitness First, has so far attracted at least 500 participants following a pair of leveling sessions the past week.

Sanctioned by the Philippine Badminton Association, Epson Cup 2 will hold its qualifying rounds at the Olympic Badminton Club in Libis, Quezon City on April 9-10 while the semi-finals and finals will be held at

the Greenhills Badminton Center in San Juan on April 15-17.

Epson marketing manager Randy Kanapi said active and former national team players are barred from joining the tournament to pave the way for the discovery of more talented players from the grassroots level.

"The national players can provide great competition but we're more concerned with discovering new talents to sustain the growth of the sport in the country," said Kanapi.

Tournament organizer Edmin Tarrila said that as early as last week, 300 badminton enthusiasts, mostly beginners, had signed up during the first of two leveling sessions, easily surpassing the number of participants during its inaugural staging.

The inaugural season of the Epson Cup drew more than 300 players, including show business personalities and other celebrities.

Registration fee is pegged at P500. For inquiries, call Pioneer

Badminton Center at 6385343, 7460828.

The First Wilson Invitational badminton championships on April 2-3 will also hold a simultaneous pair of leveling sessions along with the Epson Cup at the Pioneer Badminton Center.

Registration fee is pegged at P700, inclusive of court fees, tournament uniform, a Wilson bag, shuttlecocks, meal and entrance tickets to the awarding ceremony at the Blue Onion in Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City.



AN Epson leveling participant shows his stuff.



CRACK JUDOKAS: Helen Dawa (left) snatches a bronze medal while Daniel Pedro garners a silver for the Philippines in a Hong Kong tourney.

ROGER MARGALLO

Only 18 NSAs on target in SEA Games buildup

By Jasmine W. Payo

ATHLETES from more than half of the 41 sports calendared in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games might end up cramming on their training programs.

With only eight months left before the start of the biennial meet, national training director Michael Keon said yesterday that only 18 sports have finalized their training budget.

"We're having problems with some NSAs (National Sports Associations)," said Keon. "Some are haggling and negotiating on various aspects of their programs."

Training has kicked off in athletics, which received the biggest budget from the First Gentleman Foundation at P12 million. Other budget

proposals that have been approved were basketball, bowling, chess, dancesport, fencing, judo, lawn bowls, petanque, muay thai, rowing, sepak takraw, squash, taekwondo, triathlon, wushu, karatedo and lawn tennis.

"These are the sports which have worked everything with us," said Keon. "The basis of the training is the money and allocation. So we have to work this out with all the NSAs for a smooth training process."

Keon added that he has been lenient with the NSAs by extending the deadline several times.

"Even if some NSAs are very delinquent, we try to accommodate them," noted Keon. "The athletes should not be penalized because their NSAs are slow. The athletes are actually raring to train. So we have to wait, no matter how long it takes."

Billiards, for instance, hasn't received its training budget since its president Ernesto Fajardo and secretary general Joaquin de Tagle submitted separate proposals.

"It's an internal dispute so all I can do is just wait," said Keon.

Other sports, meanwhile, are lobbying for a bigger budget. Boxing, for example, is requesting for an increase in its P3-million allotment.

"I also think it's not big enough," noted Keon.

But Keon admitted that the financial delays have also slowed him down in his main function, which is to oversee the athletes' actual practices.

"I've only been to one or two trainings of pencak silat, rowing, basketball and athletics so I still can't come up with an informed analysis," said Keon.

Ozamiz rejoins NBC championship

OZAMIZ City has rejoined the NBC (National Basketball Conference) national championship, raising to five the number of southern divisions teams.

Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog was happy with the direction of the BAP-sanctioned NBC tournament and the impressive showing of his team in last year's competition topped by Skygo-backed Tribu Sugbu (Cebu Tribes) of businessman Lito Gillamac.

"NBC has provided a big boost to our sports development program," Mayor Parojinog told NBC secretary general Tito Palma yesterday when he confirmed the Ozamiz Cotta's participation.

Ozamiz joins the Cebuanos, the Iloilo Warriors of Iloilo Basketball League president Roberly Uy, the Cagayan de Oro Stars of former governor Antonio Calingay and the expansion team Valencia City Golden Harvest of Mayor Jose Galaro Jr. in the southern series.

Sports coordinator Mike Ochate, Vice Mayor Kaloy Bernad and coach Albert Calvo promise to form a competitive squad. The core of last year's runner-up squad (to Cebu in the southern conference)—Chris Ferraren, Milfred Sampilo, Dennis Cabigkis, Eric Araman, Dave Cabrera and Mel Libatog—will still suit up for Ozamiz.

Four other teams—national runner-up Forward Taguig of Mayor Freddie Tinga, the

Paranaque Jets of vice mayor and actor-TV host Anjo Yllana, the Baguio Cardinals of team manager Christian Bautista and Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro—are vying in the northern division.

NBC is still negotiating for the participation of Cavite Batangas, La Union, Pampanga, Davao and North Cotabato, hoping to make this year's event a 12-team affair.

The NBC will hold a tryout camp on March 29. Interested players may contact either Michelle Gaano (Northern Operations head) or Michelle Daclan (South Operations head) at 811-1374.

Aguilar, San Andres seek Motocross Masters repeat

REVTEXT standouts Glenn Aguilar and Kenneth San Andres will return to the scene of their greatest triumphs in the Motocross Masters of Asia-2005 FIM International Championship this Sunday in Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

Aguilar and San Andres won their respective categories in last year's Puerto Princesa stop of this prestigious FIM Asian event in style, beating riders from Australia, New Zealand and other aces from the Asia-Pacific region.

Aguilar, with eight national titles, and San Andres, the country's most promising young rider today, will be shooting for a repeat of their FIM conquests before the same fans that cheered them hoarse last year.

"It will be an honor performing before our kababayans once again," said Aguilar, who ruled the premier 125cc class last year.

San Andres topped the Asian Junior Class A division.

The powerhouse Revtext team is coming off a swashbuckling show in round four of the Namssa-Philippine National Motocross Championships in Sta. Maria, Bulacan, where Aguilar ruled the premier Pro Open division.

San Andres, Bebet dela Cruz and McLean Aguilar also topped their own divisions, underscoring the strength of the Revtext team, which has dominated the local motocross circuit for nearly a decade.

Dela Cruz won the Pro 125, San Andres topped the Expert Division and Aguilar ruled the Peeewe-Beginners.

In the coming Motocross Masters of Asia competition, the field will be



AGUILAR: Eight-time national titlist

tougher to beat as the best riders from Japan, Australia, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, China, Indonesia, Thailand, New Zealand, Guam and Saipan will be coming to pit guts and skills with the Revtext bets.

DSCP holds first quarter ranking tilt

FEATURING members of the national team that will see action in this year's Southeast Asian Games, the Dance Sport Council of the Philippines will host the DSCP First Quarter Ranking and Competition at the PhilSports Arena today.

Dance athletes from all over the country are competing in both Latin American and Modern Standard disciplines, according to DSCP president Becky Garcia, who added that five international licensed adjudicators are serving as judges in the competition sponsored by Petron Corp., BMW Philippines, Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Charity

Sweepstakes Office, Manila Times, Water Zone, Savannah Moon, Joey 92.3 Rhythm and Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

Helping organize the affair are the DSCP board composed of Becky Garcia, president; Noel Laman, chair; Alejandro Herrera, vice president; lawyer Josefina de Vera-Salva, secretary general; Gloria Alcala, treasurer; and directors lawyer Andresito Fornier, Marvie Yulo, Antonio Lagdameo, Edward Hayco, Prof. Naomi Enriquez, Manuel Yan Jr., Ruby Co, Nanette Mendoza, Margarita de la Rama and Jerswin Poloyapoy.

Tickets are available at the Dance Sport Training Center, PhilSports Complex, Meralco

Avenue in Pasig City. For details, call Anna Faye Lee at 6350116.

The entry book includes Southeast Asian games athletes (Latin discipline) Michael Mendoza and Belinda Adora, John Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias, alternates Richard Obong and Jenevieve Camacho and Melvin de la Serna and Vangilyn Cenina; (standard discipline) entries Rico Rosima and Filomena Salvador, Emmanuel Reyes and Maira Rosete, alternates Jerswin and Anne Poloyapoy, Edgardo Borromeo and Ana Dulce Yango; PSA awardees Reynato Renner Mercado and Judith Anne Melencio and the pair of Brian Joseph and Karla Ocana.



BEACH VOLLEY: The elimination rounds of the 9th Nestea Beach Volley tournament will start April 1-3 at La Salle Greenhills, Ortigas. Present during the event's launching were (from left): Vima Payawal of Arrow Vision, Nestea executives Bun Estavillo, Tina Samaco, and Eugene David, tournament director Ote Camangian, Nestle AVP for promos and events Raymond Villafior, senior management trainee for beverages Patrick Estorminos and Claire Petierre of Mindworks Concepts Inc.

PSC to testify versus Estimo in fund raps

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission is ready to testify in the case involving National Chess Federation of the Philippines secretary general Samuel Estimo for his alleged malversation of the government sports agency's funds, PSC executive director Guillermo Iroy Jr. said yesterday.

"Since PSC money was involved, we are the principal party. So I expect that we will be called to testify,"

Iroy, a lawyer himself, said.

A National Bureau of Investigation report recommended the filing of charges against Estimo for violation of Article 218 in relation to 222 of the Revised Penal Code.

The recommendation was contained in a letter submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman on Feb. 7 by Alejandro R. Tenerife, NBI Deputy Director for Special Investigation Services.

Manila Youth Games lures 10,000 bets

THE FINEST youth athletes from the Big City gather again at the historic Rizal Memorial Sports Complex for spirited competitions from April 17-24 in the 4th Manila Youth Games (MY Games).

The games, with the theme "Manila Sports Kasali Ka!," will for the first time hold events in the 16-17 age bracket, further jacking up the entry field to about 10,000 athletes, said Arnold "Ali" Atienza, chief of the organizing Manila Sports Council (Masco).

The games feature competitions in 14 sports and will be highlighted by a cheering contest among participating schools.

"We envision an even bigger 4th MY Games to kick off another chapter in Manila's sports history," said Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza. "We aim to stir the consciousness of the elders of the City of Manila to involve their children in sports and physical fitness, which play an important role in society."

All 897 barangays and 130 public and pri-

vate schools in Manila are expected to be represented in the games. Events on tap are athletics, badminton, baseball, chess, dancesports, football, gymnastics, softball, swimming, table tennis, lawn tennis, taekwondo, volleyball and paralympics.

Atienza said organizers have started to accept and screen entries as early as January. Entry forms are still available at the Masco main office on the fifth floor of the Manila City Hall and at the San Andres Sports Complex in Malate.

SPORTSWATCH

Rep. Nepomuceno Inv't'l Fun Run

THE 1ST Rep Blueboy L. Nepomuceno Invitational Fun Run will be held on May 28 at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. United States Embassy political counselor Scott Billard and Paul Ofriel; envoys from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, Mexico and Argentina are expected to participate in the fundraiser to combat pornography. Pasig Rep. Dodot Jaworski, Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra, Davao Rep. Way Kurat Zamora, Aurora Rep. Edgardo Angara, Manila Rep. Benny Abante, Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier, Agusan Rep. Angel Amante, Pampanga Rep. Rey Aquino, Bulacan Representatives Pedro Pancho, Reyliana Nicolas, Lorna Silverio; Bataan Rep. Antonino Roman, Biliran Rep. Gerry Espina Jr., Isabela Rep. Faustino Dy III, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza, Cibac Rep. Joel Villanueva and Akbayan Rep. Ma. Theresa Montiveros-Baraquel have also expressed their support. Race director is Boy Blue Filomeno. For inquiries, call 9518946, 9315001 loc. 7049, 0922-8084403, 0922-8172151, e-mail at cmcamillon@yahoo.com.

De los Santos tops STI cagefest

STI-DE los Santos needed an extra period to subdue STI-Recto, 108-99, and rule the 5th STI Basketball Showdown at the Makati Coliseum. With only eight seconds left in regulation, 6-foot-2 STI-DLS forward William Vasallo, who was later named tournament MVP, nailed a jumper to tie the count at 96 and send the game into overtime. Vasallo then combined with Remick Junio, Jenner Jarabejo, TJ Lazo, Louie del Rosario, Loey Castro and Jhoanes Gubantes in a 12-3 attack in extra time to put away the title for STI-DLS, mentored by former PBA cager Luke Dacula. It was the first crown for the charges of Dr. Efrén De los Santos and the second for Dacula as collegiate coach after guiding Rizal Technological University to the SCUAA title in 2003.

Checkmate summer clinics slated

THE MILO Checkmate summer chess clinics will be held at four venues in Metro Manila and three centers in the provinces. Metro Manila clinics will be held at the Jollibee-Greenhills from 2 to 5 p.m.; Burger King-Robinson Ermita from 2 to 5:30 p.m.; Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (RMSC) Badminton Building on Vito Cruz, Manila, from 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.; and on the fourth floor of J&F Divino Building, near the LRT 2 Anonas Station, Quezon City, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m. Clinics in the provinces on March 28-31 will be held at Nepo Mall, Dagupan City from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 1:30 to 5 p.m.; Garden Angels Integrated School in Balagtas, Bulacan, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Robinson Mall, Lipa City, from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m. The clinics are held daily and weekly Monday to Saturday. For inquiries, call 435-8412 and 0916-852-1069.

Leveling for Wilson badminton up

THE FIRST Wilson Invitational badminton championships on April 2-3 will hold a pair of leveling sessions during the weekend at the Pioneer Badminton Center in Mandaluyong City. Tomorrow's leveling session will begin at 6 p.m. while Sunday's schedule will be from 1-5 p.m. Registration fee is pegged at P700, inclusive of court fees, tournament uniform, a Wilson bag, shuttlecocks, meal and entrance tickets at the awarding ceremony at the Blue Onion in Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City.



BIKINI OPEN WINNERS: Fell Marr Jose and Maico Eduria won the 2005 Matabungay Bikini Open hosted by the Matabungay Beach resort and Hotel in Lian, Batangas. Runners-up were Eloisa Miranda, Brenda Bustamante, Jeremy Sebastian and Jaypee Lepiten.

Las Piñas derby features 50 fights

MORE than 50 fights are on tap in another 3-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said the entry fee is lowered to only P3,300 to lure more cockers and breeders to participate, especially those who join hackflight events at LPC. Aside from the cash prizes at stake, the champion/s will also get a washing machine as bonus. Last Wednesday, two participants emerged as co-champions in the GCAP 7-Cock Derby: Pepito Ngo (Fatman) and Gerry Ramos (Against All Odds). For details, call 8743910 and 8731040.

Roligon hosts Filcobra 4-cocker today

MORE than 60 fights are scheduled today in the fifth edition of Filipino Cockers and Breeders Association (Filcobra) 4-Cock Derby at Roligon Mega Cockpit. Action starts at 6 p.m. At stake is a cash prize of P300,000 with an entry fee of P7,700. Derby hosts are Dado Mitra of Batangas, Mauro Prieto of Palawan and Darwin Torres. Leading the Filcobra Cocker of the Year race are Philip Chiongban and Edmund Yasay (Wild na Wild, 12.5 points), Benny Lado (Black Alabat, 12), C. Tablique (Joyjoy, 12), Rey Briones (TRB Masbate), Nelson Uy (NU Red Hawk) and Albert Dichavez (Sovereign Escort) with 10 points each. Admission fee is P200 and P300. For inquiries, contact 8332275, 8331638, 8529812.



WATER Wahoo is one of the attractions of Splash Island located in Biñan, Laguna. Now open until June 15, Splash Island's admission rates are P325 (weekends) and P250 (weekdays) for adults and P250 (weekend) and P200 (weekdays) for children below 4 feet. For inquiries, call 928-0507, 410-8085 and 410-8100.

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SATURDAY Special

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Family flicks outperform
R-rated titles in 2004

LAS VEGAS—Family crowds spoke louder than fans of racy stories or shoot-'em-up action flicks last year at movie theaters, with PG-rated films hauling in more money than R-rated ones for the first time in 20 years.

PG titles grossed \$2.3 billion domestically, compared to \$2.1 billion for R-rated films, according to figures released recently by the National Association of Theater Owners. PG-13 movies did the most business with \$4.4 billion.

Five of 2004's Top 10 moneymakers were rated PG, which means they were open to all audiences, among them "Shrek 2," "The Incredibles" and "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban." Out of the top 25, only four carried R ratings, which prohibit those younger than 17 from attending unless accompanied by an adult.

Trend

"We want to call on our friends in the studios to continue this trend, and to continue to distribute family-oriented titles, because that's where we sell more movie tickets," John Fithian, the group's president, said at ShoWest, an annual convention of theater owners.

Domestic revenue at movie houses rose slightly to \$9.5 billion, though higher admission prices meant the actual number of tickets sold dropped 2.4 percent to 1.54 billion, according to the theater owners' group and the Motion Picture Association of America, the key trade group for Hollywood's biggest studios. The average cost of a movie ticket was up three percent to \$6.21.

Fithian and new MPAA chief Dan Glickman said that despite the dip in ticket sales, it was the third straight year that revenues came in above \$9 billion. More people have gone to theaters during that stretch than in any three-year period since the late 1950s, when television was eroding movie audiences, they said.

Studios managed to hold down overall



"HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN" AND "THE INCREDIBLES" (RIGHT). These films' PG rating enabled them to sell more tickets.

expenses last year, with their average outlay to make and market a movie coming in at \$98 million, down five percent from 2003. Production costs held steady at an average of \$63.6 million a film, but marketing expenses fell 12 percent to a \$34.4 million average.

Glickman, a former congressman and US agriculture secretary under President Bill Clinton, was making his first appearance at ShoWest since taking over in September from Jack Valenti, who retired after 38 years as MPAA head.

Biggest task

Like Valenti, Glickman said his biggest task is fighting movie piracy. Illegal copies of major films, often shot by camcorders off movie screens, can turn up for download on the Internet the same weekend the movies open. Pirated DVDs show up just days later.

During a trip last week to Mexico City, Glickman noted hundreds of flea-market stalls that appeared to be selling bootlegged DVDs and compact discs, including "The Paci-

fier," the Vin Diesel family flick that had debuted as the No. 1 weekend movie just five days earlier.

"The Pacifier" was produced by Glickman's son, Jonathan. When he related that to his son, there was "three seconds of silence, and 'Dad, what are you going to do about it?'"

FAMILY/ A2-2



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NOW SHOWING

Moody but insubstantial
haunted house movie

By Rito P. Asilo

"Bahay ni Lola 2"

D: Joven M. Tan
S: Dingdong Dantes, Karylle

RUPERT (Dingdong Dantes) and Nina (Karylle) are "forced" to buy a new house after the government invokes its right to eminent domain over their previous residence. But, the young, newly married couple couldn't care less—Rupert has just been promoted at work, Nina adores their baby daughter, and the new place they recently purchased is a real bargain.

Indeed, things are looking up. Unfortunately, countless pairs of omnipresent eyes are looking down at the happy couple and the rest of their family.

Ghoulishly-lit, craggy, morose faces and badly-dressed phantom-like figures in their worst-hair days inhabit this mysterious abode. They're seen suspended in mid-air in every nook and cranny, conspicuously exposed to hilarious or ho-hum effect for everybody to gawk at—except the house's new residents, that is.

Apparently, the place is haunted by the bad feng shui choices—12 of them, so far—of its previous owners. When the count hits 13, they're warned that something really bad will happen. Without heeding the warning, Rupert decides to build a swimming pool in their backyard—which is, we later learn, also a big no-no. The ad executive's personality then starts to deteriorate: He becomes forgetful, negligent of his job, and abusive to his wife. —Then, the pesky creatures start to get really antsy.

Dantes has always been a reliable lead. He may never have gone beyond his clean-cut, boy-next-door looks, but he possesses an endearing screen presence that works well for him. On the other hand, Karylle may have a stunning, limpid presence on the big screen, but she is stoic, stolid and shrill—nothing that a good, honest-to-goodness acting workshop can't fix.

But, we were aghast when, after Dantes slapped her, her character was asked to simply dismiss his abusive action with an inane line: "Hindi ko alam (kung anong problema niya). May personal crisis lang



KARYLLE AND DINGDONG. Play young married couple whose home is inhabited by ghosts and ghouls.

siguro..." Hello! His boss (Archie Ventosa) just fired him? And, he slapped you without rhyme or reason?

The movie leaves more confounding questions than answers. No concrete reason is given why ghosts haunt the house. In a penultimate scene, an angry ghost huffs and puffs as she explains how the new residents disturbed their (the ghosts') peace and quiet by deciding not to heed their constant warnings, etc. After the whole family is literally chased by countless ghastly creatures, they nevertheless decide to stay on until they find a new place to stay. —Huh?

You know that something is definitely wrong with a horror flick when its most "enjoyable" scenes are found in the hilarious, heated exchanges between the gay swimming pool designer (John Lapus) and the gay househelp (Chocoleit), who constantly sets himself up for ridicule throughout the film.

We have always noted Joven Tan's ("Biyahera," "Kiskisan") eye for striking visuals and his flair for creating moody atmosphere to establish scenes—thanks to his partnership with Romy Vitug. But, he has yet to transcend this initially engaging but ultimately alienating and insubstantial style. The technical glitches don't help, either: The sound of a slap comes before the

MOODY/ A2-3

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Notes on the disconnected media



DEL MUNDO. The broadcast industry should serve the public through entertainment, information and education.

By Clodualdo del Mundo Jr.

A LANDMARK event in local broadcasting happened last Jan. 29, aired on Channel 5. "Diretsahan," the noisy talk show hosted by Amy Perez, Jerry Springer's local clone. I consider this a "landmark" because it clearly illustrates the pits of broadcasting in the country.

"Diretsahan" is the present-day town meeting where citizens of the *barangay* find their voice. However, the issues being debated are not of national importance; they consist of everyday problems, from cleaning up the mess of the neighbor's dog, to confronting the bitch who has stolen the legal wife's husband.

Landmark episode

In this episode, Perez interviews controversial bold starlet Ynez Ven-

eracion. The conversation or *tsismis*, which Perez with all authority announces as the country's "favorite pastime," ranges from Veneracion's boyfriends to rumors that she worked as an escort before she joined show biz. The format allows the *barangay* audience to interact with Veneracion. If every *barangay* would only show that much interest in the affairs of the government!

Excerpt

What makes this broadcast a landmark event is that the episode happens at Plaza Hernandez. The impromptu stage is set up in front of the wall where an excerpt of a poem, "Panata sa Kalayaan," is inscribed. It is the final stanza of Amado Hernandez' poem from prison that expresses his cry for justice. It is never helpless, nor hopeless, and ends with the threat: "Pilipino akong sa pambubusabos ay hindi susuko!" Here is the excerpt:

Ang aking katawa'y oo nga't bilanggo,
ngunit ang isipan at tibok ng puso
ay di mangyayaring kulungin saglit
man ng bakal o ginto;
ang pananalig ko at malayang kuro,
kasama ng hangin at sikat ng araw
sa lalong malayo;
sa huni ng ibon, sa sigaw ng alon at
angil ng punlo,
sa tutol ng madla sa lahat ng utos
na buktot at liko,
sa sumpa ng tao sa kawalang-budhi
ng masamang puno,
ay nakikisaliw ang aking kaluluwang
walang pagkahapo,
hanggang sa makamtan ng bayan
ang taal na lupang-pangako—
at kahi't na nila kitlin ang buhay
ko't biyakin ang bungo,
sa bungo ko'y buong nakalimbag pa
rin sa sariwang dugo:
"Pilipino akong sa pambubusabos
ay hindi susuko!"

Poem

Decades after that poem was written, the administration of the City of Manila deemed it proper to inscribe it on the wall to commemorate the workers' poet, truly a people's National Artist.

Hernandez was not only a literary writer, he was also a labor organizer who was incarcerated in the first half of the '50s for his so-called "rebel-

lious" activities. The wall with his inscribed poem was hard-earned. The choice of the church plaza in Tondo, the hub of the country's working class, for this monument to art and labor, was inspired.

Unfortunately, the significance of Hernandez is lost in the mayhem of "Diretsahan." Today's *busabos* wallow in the muck of gossip and escape the realities of inequality through entertainment shabu.

Who cares if the live broadcast of "Diretsahan" is a desecration of Plaza Hernandez and what it's supposed to stand for? On that Saturday evening, the wall of Ka Amado Hernandez was vandalized by the electronic graffiti of crass commercialism.

The juxtaposition on the same television frame of the noisy Amy Perez in the foreground, goading and refereeing warring neighbors, or teasing juicy confessions from a bold starlet, and the quiet bas-relief of Hernandez on the wall, is an index of what is happening in our media, in general, and in our local broadcast media, in particular.

Great ideals

The media has lost its anchor in the great ideals of the past; They are now built on the inconsequential, insignificant and senseless ideas that masquerade as entertainment.

It is ironic that the media that purport to serve the public is really disconnected from it. Certainly, the broadcast networks perform public service acts that help the poor and impoverished survive the day; networks have set up foundations for this purpose. They even turn people's dreams and wishes into reality in programs like "Wish Ko Lang."

But, after the smoke from the network genie's lamp settles, we see that these public service acts are sometimes mere image-building gimmicks; they are great for the name *kapuso* or *kapamilya*. And they are acts that keep the *masa*, as the networks would label their audience, glued to their TV sets. With this huge audience in the palm of their hands, the networks can mold them into a commodity.

The networks of free TV, because of the nature of the commercial system, do not merely create programs. They are in the business to create audiences that can be sold to advertisers.

What bigger audience can there be in the country than the *masa*?

Plot

The plot to entice this audience into the lairs of television started in the '90s, when there were major shifts in programming. Programs spoke to the common people through the kind of programs that the networks think would appeal to the *barangay*.

"Eat Bulaga," with its 25 years of variety entertainment, is virtually a barometer of the kind of *palabas* that the networks think the Pinoy audience enjoys.

In the '90s, primetime news programs started using Pilipino. Today, the *masa* is the "king" that is being served by the court jesters of television.

Unwittingly, the "king" doesn't realize that he is being had by the entertainers. He is sold by the networks to advertisers.

What's wrong with that? Certainly, a robust industry is good for everyone. Broadcasting is a billion-peso industry. The problem is that broadcasting is not merely a business venture. The industry is there to serve the public, through entertainment, information, and education. It must put upon itself the task of bridging, carrying or connecting the people to a brighter future.

It looks like a big task. It is. And the media would be remiss if they ignore this task.

Empathy

What should the media do, then? First, they have to connect with the people. Empathy is a part of connection, and this is something that broadcasters apparently lack. Notice how they could not avoid asking, "How does it feel?"—As if the answer were not obvious!

Broadcasters purport to know their audience. I wonder how much they really know their public. Here lies the problem. The connection stops with knowing. But, isn't that enough? I daresay it isn't. The media in our country can't just be channels of entertainment, information, and education.

Vision is necessary. The big networks have their mission-vision, but their vision remains unimaginable.

NOTES/A2-3

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CINEMA 2000 Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati Waltermart Center, Chino Rocas Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216	Araneta Center CINEMA GUIDE For Inquiries Pls. Call TICKETNET 911-5555 GATEWAY CINEPLEX 10 Level 4, Gateway Mall The First and Only Real Cineplex in the Philippines! ALL THEATERS IN DOLBY EX ULTRA SOUND, FULL STADIUM SEATING AND EXCLUSIVE VISTA COMPUTER TICKET SYSTEM GUARANTEED SEATS, NO STANDING ROOM.	CINEMA 2000 Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
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Araneta Center Entertainment Guide

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ALI MALL CINEMAS

1 BAHAY NI LOLA 2 12:10 / 2:10 / 4:10 / 6:10 / 8:10 2 HOSTAGE 12:55 / 3:25 / 5:55 / 8:25 3 ROBOTS 12:10 / 2:10 / 4:10 / 6:10 / 8:10	4 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG 12:20 / 2:20 / 4:20 / 6:20 / 8:20 5 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD 11:20 / 1:45 / 4:10 / 6:35 / 9:00
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Family flicks.

From page A2-1

Studios and the MPAA have been pushing lawsuits and criminal arrests for those caught distributing pirated movies. "Within days or even hours, the genetic code of a movie can spread from Washington to Bangkok," Glickman said. "This issue has the potential to be a dagger in the heart of the motion picture industry."

Theater owners are mainly worried about the shrinking gap between theatrical debuts and home video release of movies. Fithian said. That window now averages just four months and 16 days, potentially costing theater chains money if moviegoers figure it is not worth the bother to head to a theater when the DVD release is just around the corner.

Still, that narrowing gap has an upside for theaters, since booming DVD sales mean more profits for Hollywood in general, Fithian said.



SHREK. Among 2004's top moneymakers.

Filipino links to the Oscars

By Behn Cervantes

OUR recent article on Filipino links to the Oscar Awards has triggered other recollections along the same lines:

The Philippines has been mentioned as the location of a number of films cited for Oscar awards. Cliff Robertson won the 1968 best actor award in "Too Late the Hero," a movie shot in the Philippines, although the location was supposedly Malaya.

Too esoteric

More films were shot here, but they got little critical notice until Francis Ford Coppola ("The Godfather" trilogy) decided to film the epic, "Apocalypse Now," in the rural areas of Laguna. He brought along a huge technical staff with two-time Academy Award-winner Marlon Brando.

Naturally, it was expected to win a number of statuettes, but the film was deemed too esoteric by the viewing public. It wasn't until decades later that critics



LHUILLIER. Patronized by top movie stars for her stunning gowns.

hailed it among the best films of the last century.

Another Hollywood maverick, director Oliver Stone, came to the Philippines not just once but twice, to film "Platoon" and "Born On the Fourth of July." These anti-war films made bigger

stars of matinee idols Charlie Sheen and Tom Cruise.

Both handsome actors were nominated for best actor, but they failed to go home with the statuettes. However, Oliver Stone's incisive criticism against American imperialism won awards in other categories.

Adverse publicity

A number of other prospective Oscar nominees would have been filmed here, were Hollywood not put off by the adverse publicity surrounding terrorist activities in the islands.

In fact, "The Great Raid," about a courageous escape by American and Filipino soldiers from a Nueva Ecija war camp, was filmed in Australia. That was a pity because the film could have given our country global exposure, and gainful employment for many of our skilled film workers.

This year, the Philippines was mentioned again, although rather obliquely. This happened everytime a Hollywood actress

would mention that her stunning gown was designed and executed by Monique Lhuillier. Those in the know took pride and exclaimed, "Pinay!"

Monique, the esteemed Los Angeles designer, is from a respected family from Cebu. She became known to Filipinos when Broadway star Lea Salonga chose her to design her much-publicized wedding gown last year.

War epics

So, it doesn't matter if Hollywood has found other shores to film their war epics, the country will continue to have an Oscar presence—for as long as Lhuillier continues to be patronized by glamorous movie stars for Hollywood's big night.

It has come full circle: Our presence started with a Pitoy Moreno gown and continues to be noticed because a younger designer of Philippine descent has obviously captured the pulse, taste and favor of Hollywood's big stars.



MUNOZ (LEFT, WITH STUDENTS). From banker to educator.

Safe and sound at Stonecastle

NESTLED in a quiet, pollution-free neighborhood in Better Living Subdivision in Parañaque City, Stonecastle Learning Center, owned by former RCBC communications executive Mary Ann Munoz, provides a progressive-holistic curriculum.

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STREET SMART



Mandy Navasero

tian living corner. The practical life-values corner, where the child develops independence and social skills. The sensory perception-fine motors corner. The music, arts and crafts corner. The corner for awareness and appreciation of our heritage and other countries' cultures.

This summer, SLC is offering workshops on Creative Dramatics for Children, Arts and Crafts, Dance and Movement, Math and Reading for children from three to 12 years old. Call 823-0177 or 0917 824-6440, or email stonecastle19@yahoo.com.

Email mandynavasero@photopro.com.ph

Sofia Coppola films 'Marie Antoinette'

PARIS—Sofia Coppola began filming scenes for "Marie Antoinette," her biopic about the Austrian teen who became queen of France, inside the lavish Versailles palace, producers said.

Coppola, who took home an Oscar last year for best original screenplay for "Lost in Translation," has also written the screenplay for her latest effort, loosely based on Antonia Fraser's book, "Marie Antoinette: The Journey."

Kirsten Dunst, the 22-year-old US actress who shot to fame as

the girl who kissed Brad Pitt in "Interview with the Vampire" and recently starred in the popular "Spiderman" movies, will portray the teenage French queen.

Quirky

Dunst has already worked with the 33-year-old Coppola on "The Virgin Suicides," released in 1999. Jason Schwartzman, Coppola's cousin who is best known for his role in Wes Anderson's quirky "Rushmore," will play her husband King Louis XVI, while

Rip Torn will play Louis XV, after French actor Alain Delon turned down the role.

Coppola's set at the Versailles palace outside Paris—where Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette actually lived—is closed to the press, the popular French daily Le Parisien reported.

Filming is expected to last 11 weeks. The entire shoot will take place in France.

Marie Antoinette was beheaded in 1793, during the French Revolution.



COPPOLA. Directs her first feature after "Lost in Translation."

Notes

From page A2-2

with the kind of programming that we see on television or hear on radio. It is all focused on the bottomline: How to be No. 1.

If the networks have a vision for the country, is the present-day programming getting any closer to that vision?

The answers to the following specific questions would give us an idea: Is the tabloid style of news programs getting us any closer to a more informed and critical society? Are show biz talk shows getting us to better appreciate entertainment? Is the sex-bomb type of dancing getting us to higher forms of art?

Based on what is happening in broadcast media today, it seems that our broadcasters do not have a sense of where their present actions would bring us. The vision is murky.

Paradigm

Stephen Covey, in his book, "The 8th Habit, From Effectiveness to Greatness," presents the paradigm of complete and truly successful people who lead powerful lives. The paradigm consists of four native human intelligences: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

These intelligences have their respective manifestations—for the physical, there is discipline; for the emotional, passion; for mental, vision; and for spiritual, conscience. If we apply these to the broadcast media, we see miserable failure. Is there discipline in the broadcast media? Do they envision the role that they would play in realizing these possibilities?

Finally, is there conscience, a force that guides vision, passion, and discipline? If the broadcast media has no vision, what need is there for conscience? Thus, we see the sensational in broadcast journalism, the risqué in talk and variety shows, simply because the vision is a shortsighted one that is limited to getting the highest ratings for the day.

Leaders

What is needed then in the broadcast media? Leaders. We need leaders who have the discipline for rigorous work, passion for connecting with people through various programs, vision

of a better future for the people, and the conscience to make all this happen.

I would be unfair to the media if I don't cite specific attempts at better and more connected media. In the history of broadcasting, we have had a few of these examples:

In the '60s, "Balintataw" brought to television a number of literary works; in the '80s, there was "Lino Brocka Presents," where original or adapted works were directed by the director himself; in the '70s and '80s, musical specials featured popular singers of the period; and there were respected broadcast journalists who delivered the news (Jose Mari Velez, Tina Monzon-Palma).

Today, there are public affairs programs like "The Correspondents" and "I-Witness" that attempt to survive in a world of entertainment.

A recent example of a "connected" television show is an episode of "Imbestigador" (with Mike Enriquez). This episode focused on the lives of "Pobrengh Pinoy," the poorest of the poor.

Trademark

In his trademark in-your-face exposé, Enriquez showed us the pobrengh Pinoy who couldn't even have one decent meal a day; those who sold body parts—kidney, teeth, even an eye—simply to survive. Shocking investigation, indeed!

I wonder what has happened after that episode? Does broadcasting merely mean "show and tell"? The audience must not be a passive spectator who watches life through the television frame.

But, I expect the broadcast media to follow through, to explore resolutions beyond the knowledge that they have opened up.

It is a tall order. But, who says that being in media is easy?

The situation may look hopeless. It should not be. But, we need leaders. We can start with one: The top honcho of any network who can inspire broadcasters with his vision of what the media can do to transform society—and with a conscience that will connect the media to the public.

Moody but insubstantial

From page A2-1

actual action is seen!

The film's press release includes a warning: "The movie has a vengeful, shocking ending you have to see to believe!" But, amidst giggling fits, a fellow

moviegoer shouted something "complimentary" when the final, you-have-to-see-to-believe scene unfolded, as the credits rolled to the tune of a Hagibis-sounding theme song (we're not kidding!). And believe us, what he said wasn't flattering!

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THE ASIA Pacific region's leading family network greets the first of the summer months with a lineup of stories that will fire the imagination and warm the heart. The Hallmark Channel fills the sunny days of March with tales for children of all ages and stories of women with style and substance.

MONTAGE

Based on Sue Miller's best-selling novel of the same title, "While I Was Gone" (March 27) examines the trials of faith and family, and the fragility of even the strongest ties.

Despite a successful New England veterinary practice and a loving marriage to local minister Daniel (Bill Smitrovich, "Independence Day"), Jo Beckett (Emmy and Golden Globe winner Kirstie Alley, "Cheers") feels an increasing restlessness, a curiosity about how her life would have turned out had she made different choices. She is further



SOUL (WITH DANCERS). Special show on March 19.

piqued with the arrival of Eli Mayhew (Peter Horton, "From the Earth to the Moon"), her old housemate at a Cambridge cooperative during the radical '60s.

Jo finds herself drawn to Eli and, though besieged with guilt, she is seduced by the possibility of an affair with him. But, before this can even begin, Eli reveals a terrible secret that not only shatters Jo's illusions about her youth, but also threatens the very foundation of her marriage and future.

In "Betrayed" (premieres March 27), a fictional town suffers an attack from where it is least expected. Judy Bryce (Kari Matchett), a recently divorced young mother, returns to her hometown and to her father (Michael Hogan) to work as a nurse's aid. Her job soon plunges her into the horror of a deadly public health epidemic. *E. coli* has contaminated the town's water, and it's a race against the clock to determine the true source of contamination and save the community before it can no longer cope with the strain of the epidemic. "Betrayed" examines an increasingly important issue on health and public safety: The regulation of food sources and drinking water.

Don't forget to catch the Hallmark Channel's exciting TV series, including "Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye," which airs every Tuesday. Other continuing series include "Just Cause," "Hustle," "Strong Medicine" and "Adoption."

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Movies on TV

On HBO, March 19 at 9:10 a.m., "8 Miles." March 20 at 1:25 a.m., "Soapdish." March 21 at 8:05 a.m., "The Hollow." March 22 at 6:45 p.m., "Star Trek: Generations." March 23 at 9 p.m., "Tears of the Sun."

On Cinemax, March 19 at 6:45 p.m., "The Hunt for the Red October." 2 a.m., "True Crime." March 20 at 6:30 a.m., "Billy Madison." 9 p.m., "Patriot Games." March 21 at 6 a.m., "Unforgiven." 1:30 p.m., "A Death in the Family." March 22 at 11:30 a.m., "Flashdance." 9 p.m., "The Bourne Identity." March 23 at 10:15 a.m., "Marjorie Morningstar."

Las Vegas comes to Jools

Experience the fun and excitement of Broadway shows with legendary performer Bobby Soul of the Platters. The colorful and exciting event will be held on March 19, 8 p.m. at Jools Entertainment Bar at 5043 P Burgos st., Makati City. Performing with Bobby Soul are the Jools Cabaret dancers, the Ding Malazo Orchestra and other special guests. Call 897-9097.



SIGNING OF AGREEMENT. (From left) Equitable's Ding Celestino and Teresita Tanbonlong, Segafredo Zanetti's Paulo Rodriguez and MTV's Terry Cua.

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HOSTAGE R13 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15	MILLION DOLLAR BABY PG-13 1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00	ROBOTS GP 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00



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3	ROBOTS 12:50, 2:50, 5:50, 8:20, 10:50 PG-13
4	HOSTAGE 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:05 PG-13

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2	CONFIDENCE MTRCB: R-13 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 LMF	4	HITCH MTRCB: PG-13 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00 LMF

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2 ROBOTS	7 SANTA SANTITA
3 CONFIDENCE	8 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
4 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD	9 CURSED
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2	10 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 ROBOTS	5 HOSTAGE
2 HITCH	6 CURSED
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD	7 CONFIDENCE
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2	

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2 CURSED	6 HITCH
3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD	7 CONSTANTINE
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST	8 BAHAY NI LOLA 2

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G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 ROBOTS	2 HOSTAGE
		3 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD	4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 ROBOTS	2 HOSTAGE
		4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
ACC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 HITCH	2 ROBOTS
		4 HOSTAGE	5 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
GB1	GREENBELT 1	SPANGLISH 11:25, 2:00, 4:35, 7:10, 9:45	
		ROBOTS 11:50, 1:50, 3:50, 5:50, 7:50, 9:50	
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 SPANGLISH 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 ROBOTS 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS
		4 CONFIDENCE 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS
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Alfred has been bitten by the acting bug

By Ronald G. Mangubat

IT was in a classroom play at the Ateneo where Alfred Vargas realized that he wanted to act for the rest of his life.

As he was delivering an emotional monologue, he saw two ladies in the audience crying, moved by the anguish of the character he was playing. "I was so touched," he recalls. "I realized how powerful the acting medium is."

The following year, he joined Tanghalang Ateneo and got immersed in a slew of classical plays. Bitten by the acting bug, he got hooked on the craft until he landed roles in television shows at ABS-CBN three years ago.



VARGAS. Show biz is a humbling experience.

Martinez. In Hollywood, I like Kevin Spacey, Anthony Hopkins, Jude Law, Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio.

Dream role

Do you have a dream role?
The role that Richard Gomez played in "Hihintayin Kita sa Langit." It's my favorite movie.

How did you react when you first saw yourself on the big screen?
Nahiya ako (Laughs). Kasi, unang scene pa lang, nakahubad na ako. I was with my dad, my girlfriend and her mother.

Is your family supportive?
Oh, yes. They only wanted me to finish college, which I did. My relatives in Bulacan and Surigao are very supportive.

You don't have any qualms about baring yourself onscreen?

Depende sa role. Ewan McGregor and Jude Law have bared themselves, too, but their roles were meaty. The funny thing is, when the director shouts action, I completely forget myself. But, when he shouts cut, saka ko na-re-realize na ang dami palang tao, tapos nakahubad ako (Laughs).

What do you do when you're not working?

I work out (Laughs). I also read books. Mga novels. And I like traveling alone.

Ginaya ko si Leonardo DiCaprio sa "The Beach." Two years ago, I traveled alone to the States—from the East Coast to the West, ako lang mag-isa. Last year, I backpacked and traveled around France and Italy.

Do you tell them that you're an actor?

When they ask, yes. It makes for a good conversation starter. It also interests them to talk to an actor from the Third World.

How do you see yourself five years from now?

Oh, I will still be acting!

How did show biz life change you?

So much! I became a totally different person because of show biz. Contrary to what other people think, show biz humbled me. It made me realize how vulnerable I am—how things can work your way, or how they cannot. It also made me realize how uncertain life can be. Maaring sikat ka ngayon, bukas laos ka na.

What do you do to hone your craft?

Sabi ko sa sarili ko, at least once a year, I'll act in a play para hindi ako kalawangin. I watch a lot of movies. I've been exposing myself to movies from around the world—including Pinoy movies. Now, I'm concentrating on Brocca.

What are your plans for your career?

I'll "milk" everything as a celebrity for two to three years. Then, I'll do serious roles, and juggle theater, TV and movies.

Whom do you idolize in the industry?

Eddie Garcia, Pen Medina, Joel Torre, Cesar Montano and Albert

Bigger break

The bigger break came when Alfred Vargas played the gold-hearted macho dancer cum lover of Cherrie Pie Picache in Jeffrey Jeturian's "Bridal Shower." Suddenly, he found himself no longer an anonymous person in a crowd, but a celebrity whose fans continue to multiply by the day.

Alfred admits the attention is overwhelming, but he always makes it a point to remind himself that, more than the fame, what really gives him joy is being able to portray a variety of roles.

This 23-year-old Ateneo management economics graduate describes himself as a passionate and focused person who is determined to get what he wants.

Q and A:

What are you currently busy with?

I'm doing Jeffrey Jeturian's "Bikini Open" for Seiko Films. I play one of the contestants. I'm also doing a really funny sex comedy play starring Francine Prieto, Christian Vazquez and myself.

How . . . From page A2-7

In the light of these findings, how can parents and educators determine if a movie is too scary or upsetting for kids? Very young children's reactions are difficult to predict because their fears tend to focus on different parts of the story that are subjectively understandable to them.

So, it is better to err on the side of caution and keep them away from movies that may scare them, especially those that feature major characters in peril, menacing bad guys, or the death of any character.

Grisly movies

By the time children are older, they will have a sense of what they can handle and be able to talk about something they find upsetting. Just as some kids love roller coasters, some enjoy grisly movies, intense violence, crashes, etc., while others never get to like them, even as adults.

So, individual choices are key as to what a child can handle, and the supervising adult should impose limits on what the child gets to see, based on these perceived proclivities.

Other aspects of movies to guard against include profanity and obscene language, insensitivity to gender and minority issues, sex and sexual behavior, violence and gore, and negative values.

Extra . . .

From page A2-7

where obesity is a growing problem.

Even as she strives to slim down, Alley says she is baffled by the preoccupation with looks and the body in society.

"It needs to be made fun of. You can't be preachy and have them learn, so you have to do it in a way that you make them laugh," she said. "Is it the worst problem in the world that I need to lose 50 pounds? I don't think so."

The first season of "Fat Actress" has guest stars such as John Travolta and Kid Rock. Showtime has signed a deal with Yahoo! to stream it to viewers on the Internet. Reuters

So you want to direct a full-length film?

By Nestor U. Torre

SINCE film is the "in" medium these days, quite a number of young talents want to direct a full-length film. Each year, around seven or eight of them are given the opportunity to do just that. Unfortunately, only a couple of them pass muster, while the others' first efforts fail to impress critics and viewers alike.

This only goes to show that feature film directing is much more difficult than prospective megmen think. So, how can you train yourself well in directing, so that when you get your big break, you're good and ready for the daunting challenge?

First of all, make sure you master the film medium, its uniquely visual language, camerawork, scripting, editing, and both the technical and creative aspects of these very specialized skills.

Experimental works

You also need to acquire a good sense of film history, so you should view the masterworks of the film medium, from early works like "Battleship Potemkin," "A Nous La Liberté," "Un Chien Andalou," and "Birth of a Nation," the best films produced by Asian filmmakers, and pioneering experimental works like the animated short films of Canada's Norman McLaren.

These pioneering and exceptional films will give you a clear idea of what the movie medium can do, and inspire you to be similarly daring in your own use of film language.

After you master the medium and its masterworks, you have to learn how to analyze

scripts. This is another difficult task to master, and requires study, thought and discussion.

Next, you need to learn how to handle actors. This includes astute casting, a skill that many directors don't have, because they generally cast according to type rather than for the closest possible link of the actor's individuality to the requirements of his screen character.

Audience psychology

After that, the prospective director must steep himself in audience psychology. He has to know what viewers are subconsciously looking for when they watch a film, and how the many strengths of the movie medium can be used to serve those expectations.

He should also study the local film production and viewing situation, to familiarize himself with its specific requirements and limitations, so he can avoid getting frustrated when his first film is beset with problems.

Finally, he should remind himself that he's making a 90-minute film, not a short film that lasts only a few minutes. Thus, he has to expand the scope of his ambition and directorial reach many times over. And he should also realize that he's making a narrative film, not a documentary, so he has to work hard to develop his storytelling ability.

A tough row to hoe? You bet. That's why only a few directors are hailed as gifted filmmakers in mainstream cinema. If you want to end up among them, rather than among the also-rans, you have to work really hard, take as much time as you need to prepare yourself, and pay your dues!

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Extra heft ushers in new career for Kirstie Alley

LOS ANGELES—"Fat Actress" isn't a label many people in Hollywood would embrace, but former "Cheers" star Kirstie Alley is reveling in it.

She even enjoyed seeing what she admits is a very unflattering shot of her ample rear end on a 100-foot movie screen at the party for her new sitcom, "Fat Actress," which premiered on the Showtime cable TV network recently.

"We were explaining to a guest it was on this huge wide screen and then midsentence I was, 'Oh my God,'" Alley said in an interview the day after the show opened. "I was apprehensive, thinking it's going to be 100 feet wide."

First episode

Alley plays herself on the show, an overweight and out-of-work actress. The first episode opens with her wailing hysterically on the floor of her bathroom, having realized that the reason she can't get a job is her size.

"My message wasn't: 'Oh wow, don't I look beautiful even though I'm hefty?' That's not what I was trying to accomplish," Alley said. "I was trying to portray somebody who's pathetically realizing that she's really fat." There are no punches pulled in the show, which was unscripted beyond a detailed outline of the plot. The actors improvise, apparently trying to outdo each other in how politically incorrect they can be.

In one scene, Alley has a meeting with the



ALLEY. Plays herself in new sitcom.

head of NBC Universal Television, Jeff Zucker, who plays himself, to discuss a new sitcom. Zucker is visibly shocked at her size and, when she leaves the room, calls her agent to complain about it.

"I don't think it's an attack on Hollywood," she said.

"It's a comment on how, if any woman walks into any interview overweight, they would be all nicey-nice and when she left, they would go, 'Oh my God, she's so fat.' It's not exclusive to Hollywood," she said.

No pressure

In another scene, Alley is shouting down the phone to her agent about the injustice of a system where men have no pressure to be thin and stars like James Gandolfini of "The So-

pranos" positively thrive on it.

"I know very few actresses who are not called in to be reprimanded for their weight," Alley said in the interview. "And that can't be true of men because if you just turn on the TV, most men are fat."

Prerequisite

"Apparently it's a prerequisite to having a sitcom. Men have to be fat and their wives have to be 20 years younger and skinny," Alley said when she was starring in "Cheers," and later "Veronica's Closet," she was constantly under pressure if she gained weight.

"On 'Veronica's Closet,' I started at around 140 lbs. and got up to 160 on and off, and still at 5'8", that's not tubby-go-lardy," she said.

But she added: "It doesn't make me angry. We eat our own lives." She said she is just as likely to laugh at a fat person, or animal, as anybody else.

"It does denote laziness. To me, I was lazy and complacent, like a big fat deer," said the actress, who has now signed a contract with diet guru Jenny Craig to promote the diet plan which she says has so far helped her lose 20 pounds.

Alley declined to say how much she weighs now. At age 54 and with two children, she is larger than most of her peers in show business, but hardly out of the ordinary in a country,

EXTRA/A2-6

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SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD

How to protect children from potentially disturbing films

By Nestor U. Torre

IT is generally agreed that films influence the development of young viewers, for good and for bad. What can parents and educators do to protect children from potentially disturbing movies? A brief background:

Many studies show that kids are harmed by premature exposure to portrayals of sex, violence, substance abuse and other inappropriate material. They become desensitized and get a distorted view of adult life.

Adult issues

A child is naturally curious about adult issues and concerns. Some movies provide an exceptionally good context for initiating discussions on those issues. Others, however, are too graphic and complex for young, relatively unformed sensibilities to relatively handle, and these are the ones that parents and educators should vet.

Trouble is, parental supervision of their kids' viewing isn't as constant as it should be, so what about the adult films that don't get on their radar screens? Nothing beats getting the young viewers' cooperation in this endeavor. After all, it's their sensibilities and values that are at stake.

Linda McIntyre and other experts thus stress that this effort

should be a mutual effort of parent and child. After securing their kids' cooperation, parents should find ways to convince them that they do need supervision.

Kids should be made to understand that they are different from adults in the ways they perceive and assimilate what they see.

Children are less cynical than adolescents and adults about their viewing fare, and more prone to confuse important issues raised by what they view, experts point out.

Motives and consequences

They are less able to see actions in light of motives and consequences, more apt to confuse fantasy and reality, and ready to accept screen characters as models for their own behavior.

As a result, children are more vulnerable to the potential negative messages in what they watch, including violence and other inappropriate behavior.

To complicate things further, film and TV delight in fast-paced action and cuts that are difficult for young children to follow, often causing them to miss the consequences and motives that are central to understanding and analyzing actions.

For instance, researchers once showed kids in kindergarten, and second, fifth and eighth graders an edited version of an aggressive TV program. Afterward, they were asked to recount the plot, their understanding of the main characters' motives, and the consequences of their actions.

The youngest kids typically remembered only the aggressive actions, and didn't mention any motives or consequences.

In contrast, the older children associated consequences first, then motives, and finally the full complex of motives and consequences as they described aggressive action.

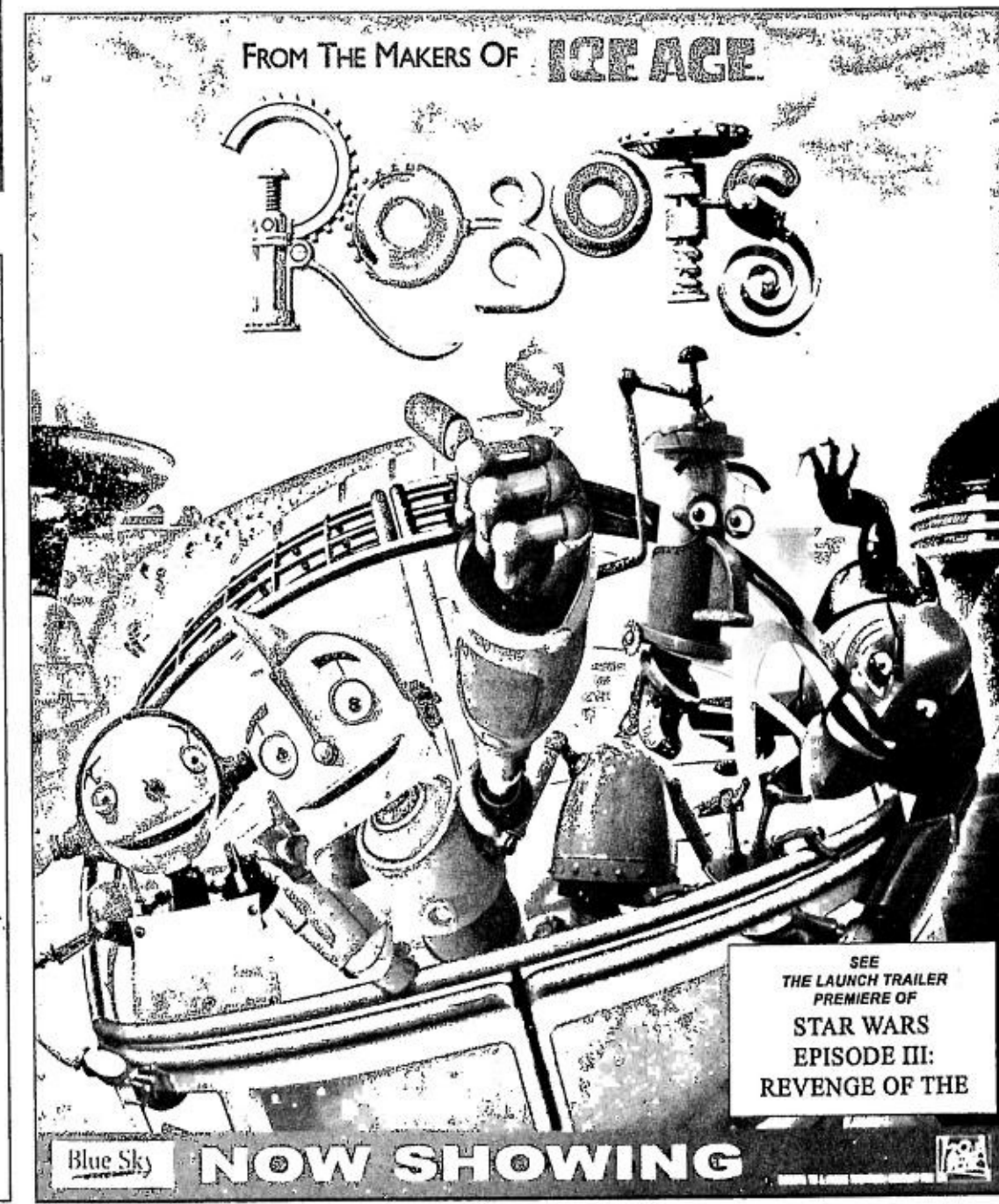
Violence

Thus, child psychologists say, younger children are prone to see actions like violence as "stand-alone" deeds. And children are more likely than adolescents or adults to act on the violence they witness on the screen, if it is portrayed as rewarding.

By watching aggressive behavior with an underdeveloped ability to see motives or consequences, children get a distorted impression of what actions mean in the real world.

Happily, a definitive shift in viewing sophistication generally occurs around the age of nine. Parents, take note.

HOW/A2-6



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SATURDAY Special

Julia, Ashton depart from usual roles

By Nestor U. Torre

JULIA Roberts has served notice to her fans that, for the next couple of years or so, she's putting her high-flying acting career on hold, in favor of focusing exclusively on her new family (husband and twins).

Not to worry, though, she's leaving a couple of movies for her fans to remember her by. The first, "Closer," is headed for local screens anytime now, and Roberts' role in it is a striking departure from her usual romantic-comedy or light-drama roles.

In "Closer," Roberts challenges herself to explore issues about the compelling woman she plays, who understands what she wants, even as it's constantly in flux.

Secret affair

At film's start, Roberts' character, Ana, is a successful photographer and recent divorcee. After flirting with Dan (Jude Law), she marries Larry (Clive Owen)—all the while carrying on a secret affair with her first beau!

The film is a compelling viewing experience. It's about the intimacy of being compassionately human. Its characters may be grievously flawed, but they're all trying to be close to each other, to something they really value. Mike Nichols directs.

Contrastingly, "Guess Who" pairs up Ashton Kutcher and Bernie Mac in a modern take about an overprotective but loving father (Mac) confronted with the unexpected arrival of his prospective son-in-law (Kutcher).

It's a modern update on and twist to the landmark Spencer Tracy-Katharine Hepburn starrer, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" among the first movies to tackle the topic of racial disparity.

This time around, the genders have been switched: The "threatened" family is black, and the interloper is white. The film inverts



ROBERTS. Puts high-flying acting career on hold.

the racial disparity to give it a more contemporary twist, and adds the themes of family loyalty and romantic commitment.

For Mac, acting in the movie gave him the opportunity to pay tribute to the original film's stars. He admiringly recalls, "Spencer Tracy and Sidney Poitier were powerful and eloquent about who they were, and Katharine Hepburn was just as powerful without saying a word."

Finally, all the way from Thailand comes the top action-thriller, "Ong Bak: The Thai Warrior," which is being released worldwide by Buena Vista Int'l. through Columbia Pictures. This signifies BVI's continuing intent to champion Asian movies.

Stuntman

Thai stuntman Tony Jaa stars in the film, which is directed by Prachya Pinkaew. In the movie, a sacred statue of Buddha called Ong Bak is stolen, and it becomes the task of Ting, Tony's character, to track the thief down and reclaim the religious treasure.

Along the way, Ting must make full use of his astounding athleticism and traditional Muay Thai skills to fight his adversaries. The fight scenes and stunts are staged realistically, with no digital special effects. Tony makes such a strong impression in the film that a new international action star is definitely born.



KUTCHER AND MAC. Topbill remake of "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?"

Blanchett, Butler prove they're more than just beauty and brawn

FROM Evelyn Santos: "I read with interest Saturday Special's recent articles about Joyce Jimenez pursuing higher education and Rufa Mae Quinto wanting to finish school. Please feature celebrities who set good examples to the youth by finishing school."

Yes, Evelyn, even celebrities concede to the instability of the acting profession. Some of them openly scoff at their chosen craft—it's almost like a love-hate relationship.

Gifts

Katharine Hepburn, for one, was quoted as saying, "Acting is the most minor of gifts and not a very high-class way to earn a living. After all, Shirley Temple could do it at age four!"

A number of popular show biz personalities sought college degrees before settling for a profession in the performing arts. Hepburn herself was a college graduate with a bachelor's degree in history and philosophy.

Oprah Winfrey, the first black

woman in history to produce her own talk show, was voted most popular in high school. Then, she finished college with degrees in speech communication and performing arts at Tennessee State University.

Oscar best supporting actress winner Cate Blanchett ("The Aviator") went to Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Arts. In 1993, a year after graduating, she earned critical acclaim for her performance in Caryl Churchill's "Top Girls" (a feminist play mounted here by New Voice in 1997), and won the 1993 newcomer award from the Sydney Theatre Critics Circle for her turn in "Kafka Dances."

Emma Thompson ("Sense and Sensibility") graduated with a degree in English Literature at Cambridge University, where she co-wrote and directed the school's first all-female revue, "Woman's Hour," in 1983. Hugh Grant also has an English degree (from Oxford).

Another British thespian, Gerard Butler, 35, who recently

BLANCHETT/A3-2

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Bubl  sticks to successful formula

By Noelani Torre

THE past two years have been more than good for Canadian crooner Michael Bubl . His 2003 self-titled debut went platinum, and he spent 2004 going round the world charming audiences from London to Manila with his renditions of jazz and pop standards like "Fever" and "Kissing a Fool."

In that time, he also released a two-CD live album and apparently managed to squeeze in more hours at the studio, because the indefatigable 27-year-old has just presented us with his sophomore record, "It's Time" (143/Reprise).

Bubl  is at his Rat Pack wannabe-est here, what with the suit and loose tie get-up he sports on the cover—as if we needed any more reminders about whose style he's imitating. Folks familiar with his freshman effort will tell you that it screamed Frank Sinatra from beginning to end, and his follow-up release doesn't veer away from that formula.

Hit

Of course, we weren't really expecting the guy to change his style—it has proven to be a hit, after all—and you could do a lot worse than pay homage to Old Blue Eyes. Still, we looked out for new elements in this new release, and the changes we found were in the playlist itself.

Bubl  has updated his song choice somewhat, including newer standards such as "Try a Little Tenderness," "Can't Buy Me Love," and "How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved By You)."

There's also an original song lurking somewhere—"Home"—which he co-wrote with Amy Foster-Gillies and Alan Chang. Aside from these mild re-vamps, however, nothing here differs much from his



BUBL . Agreeable, lighter-than-air interpretations.

first CD's material.

On the positive side, there's nothing here that will cause offense, either. In fact, offensive is the very last adjective we'd use to describe these agreeable, lighter-than-air interpretations.

There's nothing more pleasant than Bubl 's smooth, confident vocals, and the right-on-the-button production of David Foster and Humberto Gatica.

Unfortunately, these same qualities also

contribute to making this album a rather bland collection. Slick production values have their allure and Bubl 's voice is as inviting as it can get, but the point is, all this has been done before.

Version

After all, why bother listening to a still raw twentysomething's version of "I've Got You Under My Skin" when the Sinatra original is already practically flawless? While Frank lets us hear true love pulsing distressingly under the deceptively easygoing lyrics, Michael sounds like he's singing about a schoolboy crush.

Another reworking that doesn't quite work is his interpretation of Nina Simone's "Feeling Good." Again, Bubl  falls short in the sounds-like-he-actually-means-what-he's-singing category. The song has been stripped of its poignancy, and substituted with cinematically overblown strings and the like. "Can't Buy Me Love," meanwhile, sounds awkward and "Quando, Quando, Quando" is rescued from cheesiness only by Nelly Furtado's spicy vocals.

If there are any songs here that do work, these would be the quietly yearning "Home" and a soft yet powerful rendering of Stevie Wonder's "You and I." Both pieces ring with the emotional sincerity that is missing in the other tracks.

Carmen Rosales remembered

By Lena Strait Pareja

CARMEN Rosales lived in an era when a movie star was a celebrity par excellence—when movie queens were glorified and their private lives were kept hidden so that nothing would tarnish their appeal as gilded idols of the silver screen.

When Sampaguita Pictures signed up Carmen Rosales to be the leading lady of Rogelio de la Rosa in "Takipsilim" (1939), she was a virtual unknown. She had earlier appeared in "Arimunding-Munding," but there was no follow-up picture immediately after.

When "Takipsilim" was released during the Christmas season, a "legendary" love team was born. The magic of Rosales and Rogelio de la Rosa would remain on local screens for three decades until the mid-1950s.

Classic romantic films

Among their classic romantic films were "Se orita" (1940), "Colegiala" (1940), "Lambingan" (1940), "Panambitan" (1941), "Tampuhan" (1941), "Maala-ala Mo Kaya" (1954), "Ang Tangi Kong Pagibig" (1955) and "Lyong-Iyo" (1955).

When De la Rosa tossed his hat into the political ring for the presidential elections, Rosales continued appearing in Sampaguita movies together with other leading men like Jose Padilla Jr. ("Matandang Dalaga," 1954), Cesar Ramirez ("Uhaw na Pagibig," 1955), Ric Rodrigo ("R.O.T.C.," 1955), Eddie Garcia ("Halik sa Lu-



ROSALLES. Quintessential screen icon.

pa," 1961), and Leopoldo Salcedo ("Anak ni Kamagong," 1964).

She started her professional acting career after she was proclaimed Radio Queen in 1937. She met and fell in love with radio personality Ramon Novales. Their marriage produced one son, Rene. Ramon met a tragic death during World War II while fighting the Japanese.

Carmen continued his fight. Soon after, a barrio (Carmen) in Rosales, Pangasinan was named after her. Her real-life war exploits have been made into a movie by Sampaguita, "Guerilyera" (1946).

Freelancer

After the war when she resumed her acting career as a freelancer, she married Jose Puyat Jr., with whom she had one son, Cesar. She appeared in Premiere Productions'

first picture, "Probinsiya" (1946), which turned out to be a big box-office hit.

When she returned to Sampaguita, she was reunited with Leopoldo Salcedo in Eddie Romero's "Hindi Kita Malimot" (1948).

In 1949, she became the highest-paid movie star when LVN Pictures paid her the unprecedented sum of P45,000 to team up again with Rogelio de la Rosa in "Kampanang Ginto."

Aside from being a top-rate actress, Carmen was also a singer. She recorded the famous love songs of Constandio C. de Guzman, Mike Velarde and Josefino Cenizal.

I got hooked on Carmen as a movie fan since I was old enough to read and write. I saw her movies before the war in Masbate.

Each time I came home from seeing a Carmen Rosales movie, I would spend hours inside my grandmother's bedroom pretending I was Carmen fluttering her eyelids at Rogelio de la Rosa as she sang my favorite song.

Better singer

My American forbears named me after Lena Horne, but as far as I was concerned, Carmen Rosales was a far better singer. Now that I have replaced my late grandmother as the Lola of the family, it strikes me as odd indeed that I would still feel the same way as I did 64 years ago!

I'm still a Carmen Rosales fan. And that is the magic of the movies that nobody can take away from me!

Only . . .

From page A3-3

switching to another channel?

Finally, time was when local TV shows started pretty much on time, but that rarely happens these days. TV programs squeeze in so many commercials that schedules have

gone crazy. In fact, many shows no longer specify a starting time, all they do now is promise to come on "after (title of the previous program)." What lousy service to viewers!

Blanchett, Butler . . .

From page A3-1

played Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera" on the big screen, finished a Law degree at Glasgow University before he acted in the stage version of "Trainspotting." (He originated the role that Ewan McGregor portrayed in the Danny Boyle film.)

Larger than life

In his new projects, he continues to play

BLANCHETT AND BUTLER. She has formal training in acting; he's a lawyer.



larger than life characters like English poet Robert Burns in Vadim Jean's upcoming "Burns" and the mythical Beowulf in the Canadian-Icelandic co-production of "Beowulf and Grendel."

Christopher Reeve had more than just kryptonite and Lois Lane in mind when he decided to pursue acting. An alumnus of Cornell University, the "Superman" icon was one of only two students in his batch accepted at Juilliard to train under John Houseman. The other lucky actor? Comic superstar Robin Williams—who recently finished shooting David Duchovny's directorial debut, "House of D."

On the other hand, Duchovny, 44, attended Princeton University, earned a Master's degree in English Literature at Yale, and was finishing his doctoral thesis on Samuel Beckett ("Waiting for Godot") when he succumbed to the acting bug.

Awesome mix

Another heartthrob, Paul Walker, may look like he's nothing more than "beauty and brawn," but add "brain" to the awesome mix—the classically handsome actor has a degree in marine biology! He plays—surprise!—a marine biologist in his next movie, John Stockwell's "Into the Blue."

"The Apprentice's" Donald Trump was voted as his class' "Ladies Man" at the New York Military Academy in 1964. He is an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

Korean heartthrob Park Shin Yang, 35, who played Carlo on TV's "Lovers in Paris," trained extensively in dance in Russia—he majored in ballet!

Finally, there's Sandra Bullock ("Miss Congeniality"). She graduated from high school in 1982. That year, the popular cheerleader was voted "Most Likely to Brighten Up Your Day." Providential, eh?

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INVESTIGATION STATUS REPORT

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Join Inquest
Read CHAPTER 5 in the LIFESTYLE SECTION tomorrow!

Canon Powershot A75

Only on Philippine television

By Nestor U. Torre

VIEWERS here love watching our homegrown TV productions, as shown by the huge ratings those Pinoy programs have been getting. Along with the popularity, however, comes a slew of complaints about less than professional conduct on the tube on the part of some of our not so well-trained or intelligent television personalities.

We call this list our Only on Philippine Television observations or gripes, because we don't see these modes of conduct in other countries or on cable television. Why do our TV people resort to them? Partly because they don't even know that they're doing anything wrong, or because they just don't care what viewers think or say.

Comfortable

There's also the feeling that our on-camera TV talents have become so comfortable on the small screen that they behave on it the way they do at home. That's honest and spontaneous, but it's also occasionally off-putting because some of their actions and statements are so gauche.

Only on Philippine television:

- On a recent TV coverage of a protest rally, the channel's field reporter interviewed a rally leader about the issues they were protesting against. After the rally leader passionately discussed those issues, the field reporter thanked

her—and "gifted" her with "giveaways" like a bag, baby oil, milk, underwear, etc. Even more surprisingly, the rally leader was initially nonplussed—but accepted the "gifts," anyway!

- On some shows, the hosts have so many sponsors to thank and friends to greet that they're given one minute to do so. This "regular portion" has gotten so "formalized" that it comes complete with a clock ticking the remaining seconds off, etc.

Cause for concern

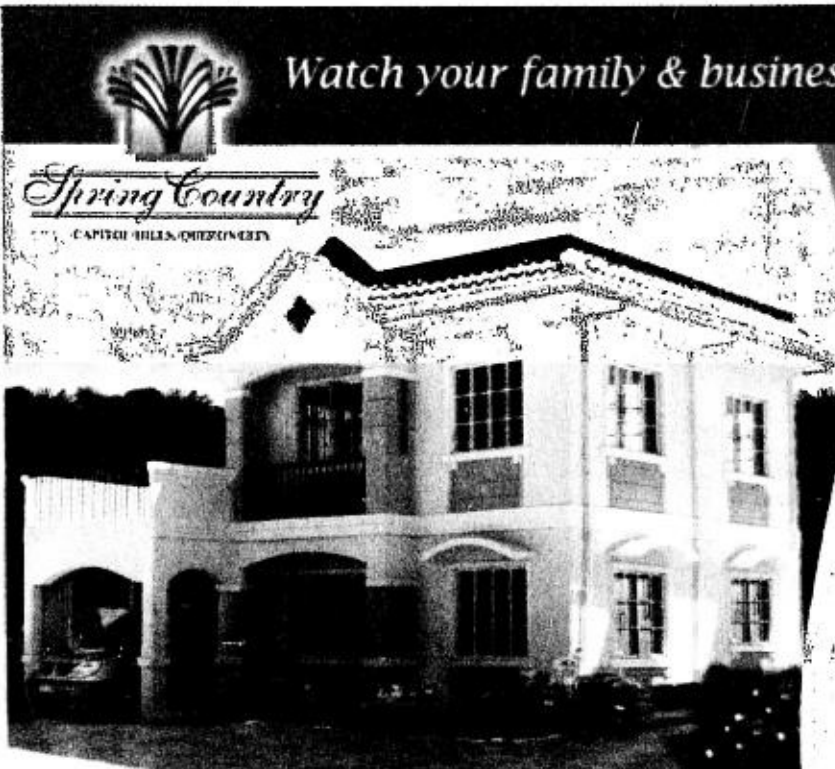
- Noontime and even morning TV shows feature sexy women and men in skimpy bikinis, even if many children are watching. You don't see this anywhere else on this televiewing planet, so it's become a national cause for concern, scandal and shame. The wonder is that more parents and educators don't complain, and that government regulatory bodies let it slide. It's a scandal!

- All of our TV personalities feel they have to celebrate their birthdays on the tube, complete with birthday cakes, gifts, best wishes from other celebrities, happily weeping relatives, etc. What's the big deal about birthdays in these parts? Being born is no accomplishment on our part, and some TV people's continued existence is not really worth celebrating.

- Why do so many TV hosts and guests shout so much on the tube, as though the microphone has yet to be invented? They mistake volume for vitality, and our poor eardrums suffer, as a result. Can we be blamed for zapping them out of existence by

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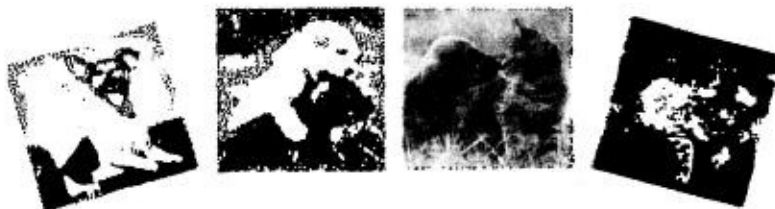
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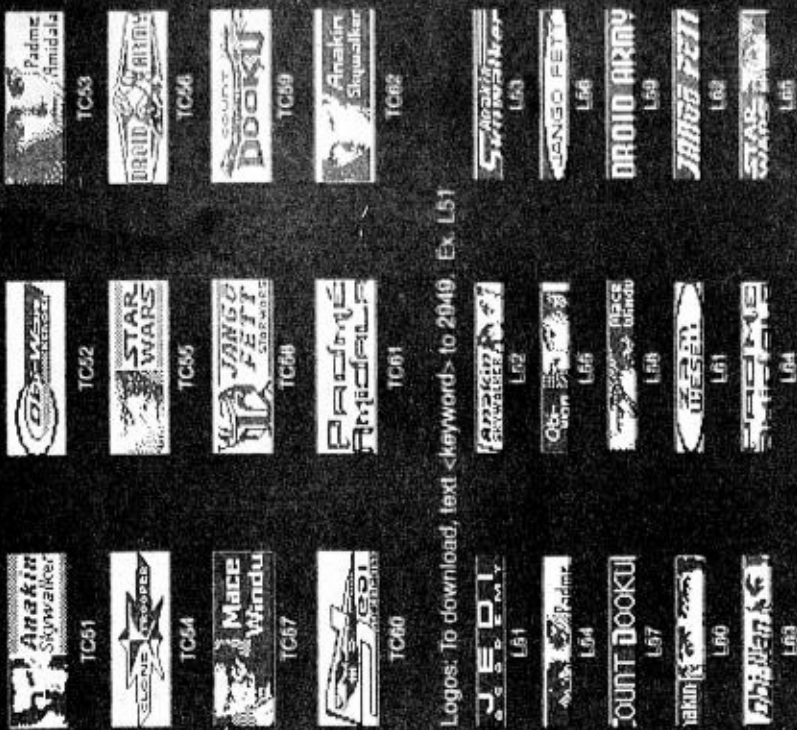


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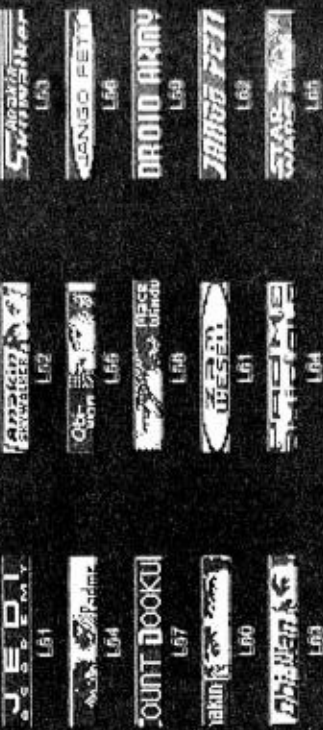
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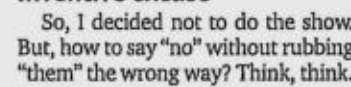
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Paul Newman to retire

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Even in my sleep-deprived state



After some prodding, the producer confided that she had gotten a call from a person associated with "them," and she had been discouraged from going on with the project, for fear that the musical would raise comment and gossip about the woman who was perceived by some to be Evita's counterpart in this part of the world. Appreciate that for what it's worth. —Like I said, a cautionary tale.

While watching the Oscar portion that chronicled the demise of Hollywood celebrities in 1997, I was taken aback when Sam's face was flashed on the small screen. He was described as a scriptwriter and director. "My friend," I whispered.

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'American Idol' down to final 12

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST week, "American Idol" upped the ante for its ongoing competition in a major way: It kicked out four more semi-finalists and ended up with its final 12 contestants, one of whom will soon be hailed as the American Idol for 2005.

Alas, one of the "rejected" four was Amanda Avila, the semi-finalist some people believe has Filipino roots. Well, easy come, easy go. But "AI" will feel less exciting for us from here on in, with no Fil-Am bet to root for.

Favorites

In any case, we have our favorites among the final 12, so we'll continue watching the show to see if they end up among the tilt's final three.

The 12 finalists are Carrie Underwood, Jessica Sierra, Mikalah Gordon, Lindsey Cardinale, Vonzell Solomon, Nadia Turner, Scott Savol, Anwar Robinson, Bo Bice, Constantine Maroulis, Anthony Fedorov and Nikko Smith (who replaced Marlo Vazquez after he quit for personal reasons).

After seeing them perform for weeks on end, we believe the show's final six will be Carrie, Vonzell, Nadia, Constantine, An-



POPULAR talent search has chosen its best dozen contestants from last week's Top 24.

war and Anthony.

More highlights and sidelights: During last week's elimination round, the two remaining rockers, Bo and Constantine were expected to cancel each other out. After all, the tilt's final "mix" needed only one rocker, right? But, wonder of wonders, the two rock singers both survived the cut.

But the next rounds will be even tougher on them, since they stress versatility, and the rockers will be required to forego their best performing suits and do jus-

tice even to—gasp!—Barry Manilow tunes. Will they survive the ignominy?

Survivor

To us, the most amazing musical survivor of them all is portly Scott Savol. We fully expected that he would be the first of the 24 semi-finalists to go, but he's made it all the way to the final 12!

What could account for his surprising popularity with text voters? Some say he could be this year's Ruben Studdard, while

others believe that his ordinary looks give the millions of ordinary people out there somebody to root for, and empathize with. Well, whatever.

Another finalist whose projection is reminiscent of past editions of the competition is Anthony, who is a Clay Aiken look- and sound-alike. Well, Clay ended up as Ruben's runner-up, so Anthony could also hang in there up to the "final-final" leg of the competition.

Little boys lost

He and Clay have another link to viewers going for them: They both look like little boys lost, and bring out the mothering instinct in female (and gay?) members of the audience.

The latest wrinkle in the tilt was Vazquez's decision to stop competing in it, despite the fact that he was among the better and more popular finalists. But, this is by no means an unusual incident.

In past years, other frontrunners quit, and some rounds ago in the 2005 tilt, a gifted black singer also opted out. Her reason: She couldn't stand the constant tension, so she decided to, as she put it, "get off the roller-coaster." Potential stardom is great, but the attendant stress can be such a pain!

Lou Veloso directs 17th season presentation of 'Martir sa Golgota'

By Andy Bais

AROUND this time of year, versatile theater actor and television and movie comedian Lou Veloso is at his busiest.

This is when Tanghalang Sta. Ana, a community-based theater group that Lou founded in the early '80s, mounts its Lenten stage presentation, "Martir sa Golgota" in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

"Martir," a presentation that incorporates original songs and choreography, is now on its 17th season. It will have performances at Plaza Marga, Tondo on March 21 with Rotary Clubs of District 3810-Centennial Team as sponsor; Pagsanjan, Laguna Town Plaza, March 22; Plaza Hugo, Sta. Ana, March 23; San Juan Plaza, March 24; and Glorietta Activity Center, March 26 as sponsored by BPI Foundation. Everybody is welcome to watch the shows for free.

Pet project

Lou admits that sourcing funds for his pet project has never been easy. "Na-experience na naming mag-solicit ng cash or in kind sa maliliit na sari-sari store sa paligid ng Sta. Ana," he reveals.

Lou, however, is grateful that with the help of his theater and media friends, he was able to attract generous sponsors to support this year's presentation.

"Talagang gumawa kami ng paraan para matuloy ang palabas this year. This is the only chance na maka-perform ang karamihan ng Tanghalang members, numbering close to a hundred. This is also a much-awaited event, hinahanap ng mga tao," he enthuses.



VELOSO. This year, his religious drama focuses on poverty, corruption and terrorism.

As in its past stagings, Lou is directing "Martir." Its script was written by a priest, with most of the lines lifted from the Bible.

Each year, it focuses on certain themes depending on the current issues. For this year's presentation, it focuses on poverty, corruption and terrorism.

Transformation

The former Manila councilor looks forward to every "Martir" rehearsal. "Napapa-tunganga ako at how the actors transform themselves from raw talents into honed thespians," he proudly says.

Lou is referring to his Tanghalang members, the majority of them out-of-school youth, with ages ranging from six upwards. They come from all walks of life—tricycle driver, retiree, teacher or fish ball vendor.

"Meron nga kaming member na deafmute at nakakatuwa na, despite his condition, napapa-arte namin, at laging on time for rehearsals," he adds.

Cast members of "Martir" include Yul Servo, Ricky Davao, Richard Signey, Alma Concepcion, Ivy Violan, Allan Mirasol and Candice Giron.

Paul Newman to retire

From page A4-1

Joanne Woodward.

"Joanne is the artistic director of the Westport Country Playhouse"—a theater near the couple's Connecticut home—"and her duties will stop this year," Newman said. "If my racing stops, the two of us will be together, spend some time just horsing around."

In London to promote a deal between his Newman's Own range of salad dressings and fast-food giant McDonald's, Newman sat recently in a McDonald's branch on London's busy Oxford Street, surrounded by fast-food executives and a British television crew.

The actor turned 80 in Jan-

uary; he moves a little stiffly and strains to hear occasionally. But, his clear skin and sparkling eyes are as vivid as ever, and his passion for his business and charitable work is undimmed.

Salad dressings

Newman's salad dressings, pasta sauces and popcorn have raised \$175 million for charity since the actor and his friend A.E. Hotchner started the company as a lark in 1980.

Regularly voted among the greatest movie stars of all time—he ranked No. 1 in a 2001 British survey of screen leg-

ends—Newman has been nominated nine times for acting Oscars, and won the best actor prize in 1986 for "The Color of Money."

But, he says he is proudest of his charity work, especially the Hole in the Wall summer camps for seriously ill children in the United States, Britain, Ireland, Israel, France and Africa.

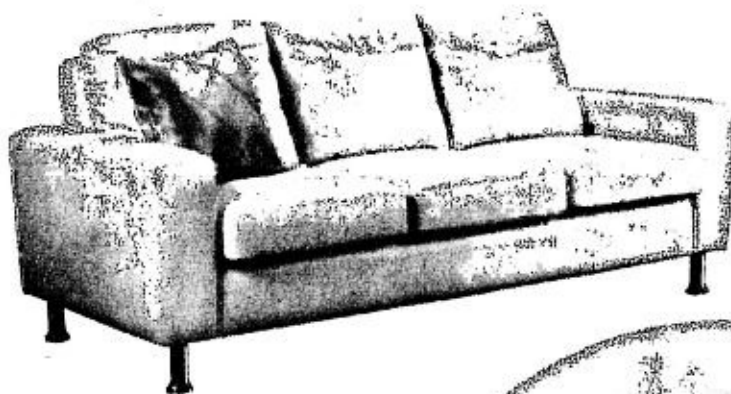
The robustly liberal actor dismisses Internet rumors he plans to run against Connecticut's conservative Democratic senator, Joe Lieberman. "It'd be lunatic to try to get into politics at my age. I don't have the stomach for it." But, he says he is worried by the poli-

cies of the Bush administration.

"I wish I felt a little more comfortable about the direction that we're going," Newman said carefully. "It does not seem to be of the people, by the people and for the people. It seems to be about something else completely different."

Media's fault

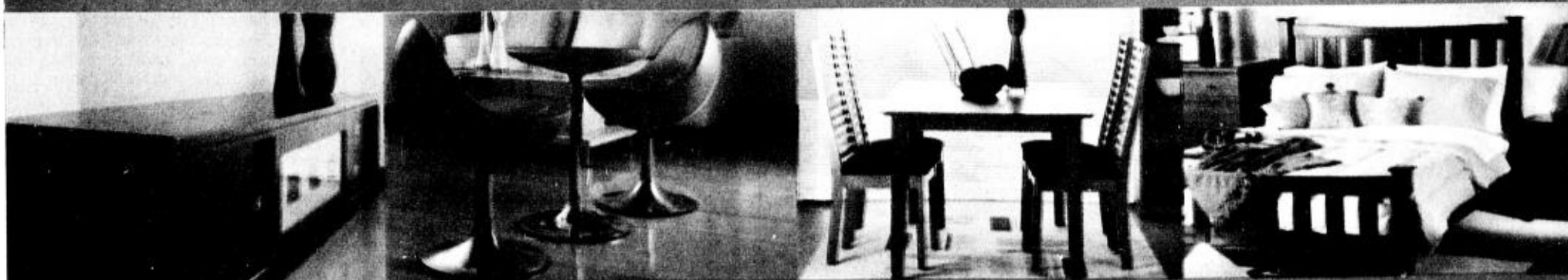
"I think part of it is the media's fault for not being more aggressive, persistent and nasty, and I think it's the people's fault for not paying attention. That's not a good combination. It allows people in government to do pretty much what they want." AP



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Raymond Red goes digital with 'Kamera Obskura'

By Rica Arevalo

RAYMOND Red doesn't usually seek publicity for his film endeavors. So, when he invited me to visit him at Filmex, I knew that something exciting was brewing in his career. This time, he took the initiative to share with me his new "baby."

Red's upcoming film, "Kamera Obskura" (Obscure Camera), is one of 28 Asian productions invited to the Hong Kong Asia Film Financing Forum to be held from March 22 to 24. (http://www.haf.eexpohk.com/html/projects/2005_movie04.htm).

The forum aims to help filmmakers who have difficulty getting financing and completion funds. It also aims to assist with the distribution of these features.

Opportunity

"This opportunity is a turning point in my film career. After 22 years as filmmaker, I still find myself struggling, no matter how established some people perceive me to be. This forum gives me an opportunity to rethink my approach to making films," shares Red.



RED. His latest film depicts Philippine society in a corporate setting.

Red is joining the bandwagon of the ongoing digital revolution: He will use the newest digital format, High Definition Video (HDV). He shares, "I have been a film purist for the longest time. But, HDV has made me realize that with this technology, I can now shoot on digital video and still achieve the feel and texture that I've always loved in the film format."

HDV provides consumers a

chance to improve the quality of footage to almost high-definition resolution and still shoot with the mobility of a camcorder.

You can use DVCAM and mini-DV tapes, and the camera can switch to either NTSC or PAL. Because of its high resolution, the possibility of blowing it up to 35mm and releasing it in commercial theaters is not far-fetched.

Exciting

He adds, "I find that exciting because it's true that this affordable medium is giving an opportunity to artists who would otherwise not be able to realize their concepts on film. Now, we have a medium that's affordable and accessible to almost anybody!"

In "Kamera Obskura," Red represents Filipino society in a corporate setting. A man wanders into a building and slowly works his way up the ranks. Raymond narrates, "He is naive, but because of his purity, *naging totoo sya sa lahat ng tao. Nakita nya yung baho ng sistema, the corruption, oppression and abuse of power.*"

The original concept was to shoot the experimental film in Super-8 format. Red wanted to

play around with the phenomenon of "camera obscura," the origins of photography and motion picture, where light passes through a pinhole in a dark room to create images; the projected scene is inverted on the other side of the dark room.

"I was fascinated by that phenomenon. I wanted to use it symbolically through a character who watches an outside world 'inside' the camera," he says.

The screen tests began last week. "I am open to working with popular actors. However, in my productions, there are no 'stars.' Everybody has to go through a screen test to see if he fits the role."

Great concept

Whatever happened to his "Makapili" project? With a sigh, he shares, "After all these years, feeling *ko, na-shoot ko na yung film*. Modesty aside, it's a great concept. *Kaya lang*, it only exists in my mind. I could see every shot *sa dami ng bangungot na dinaanan ko sa kakaisip sa film*. It came to a point that I told myself I needed to move on." But, Red is still looking for producers for his dream project.

Love under the sea

ROMANTIC movie couple Cesar Montano and wife Sunshine Cruz can count themselves lucky: They recently did a repeat of their marriage vows—not in the air, as one would think, considering that Thai Airways sponsored the event—but 40 feet under the seal.

Billed as "The Biggest Underwater Wedding Ceremony," the unique happening was Thai Airways' bid to make it to the pages of the Guinness Book of World Records.

A total of 45 couples from around the world were invited to participate in the mass wedding at Trang, Thailand, whose Pak Meng Beach is one of that country's most popular diving destinations.

The concept of the underwater mass wedding was born in the late '90s when a foreign couple vacationing in Trang decided to stage their wedding as a diving event and, in the process, gained a lot of media coverage.

Successful

So successful was the first wedding that the Guinness Book of World Records awarded it "The World's Largest Underwater Wedding Ceremony" in 2000. Indeed, Trang is a tourist's dream, with its beautiful white sand beaches, coral reefs and colorful marine life.

It was to this tropical paradise where Thai Airways flew Cesar and Sunshine on its usual "smooth as silk" flight.

The bridal couples, dressed in



THE MONTANOS. Most popular couple.

Thai finery, mounted decorated tilburies to join a parade through the city streets. Sunshine and Cesar were the most popular among the couples, as the local press played up their being "superstars" in the Philippines.

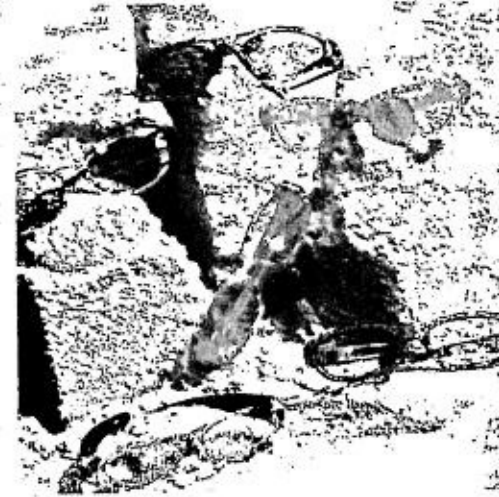
Wet suits

On the day of the wedding, the couples exchanged their wedding outfits for wet suits.

"It was fun!" says Sunshine, recalling the event. "We were told to dive 40 feet into the water. Down below were people seated at tables before whom Cesar and I exchanged marriage vows—all in sign language, of course!"

Cesar chimes in, "I've sealed my love for Sunshine above the ground and under the sea—and everywhere in between!"

After their once-in-a-lifetime experience, the couple flew home over the weekend, still on Cloud Nine, replete with happy memories and renewed commitment to one another.



"OPEN WORLDS." Observes varied communication styles of different creatures.

How animals 'talk' to each other

By Noelani Torre

WE humans feel quite smug about our innovations in communication technology. After all, we're able to communicate on a global scale, conveying instantaneous messages across distances that would have boggled the minds of our ancestors. What we don't realize is that we're actually latecomers to this sort of thing—animals have been communicating quite sophisticatedly with each other even before the invention of the wheel, much less the Internet!

This intriguing view is the basis of an hour-long feature we were able to watch recently on the Animal Planet channel. "Open Worlds," one of the features in the "Girls Night In" show, takes us from the frozen expanses of the Arctic to the blazing Californian desert as we observe the varied-communication styles of some very noisy—figuratively speaking, that is—animals.

Women hosts

"Girls Night In" gives us features helmed by women—and you have to admit that animal shows with women hosts aren't as ubiquitous as those featuring blokes like the Crocodile Hunter. "Open Worlds" has Dr. Charlotte Uhlenbroek on the job, and her quiet passion is vaguely reminiscent of the renowned Jane Goodall, under whom she in fact studied.

Originally aired as a four-part program on BBC, "Open Worlds" introduces us to the long-distance trunk calls of elephants, the rather absurd-looking displays of the male sage grouse, the UV scent marks of desert iguanas, and other ways in which animals talk to others of their own kind.

We begin at the Arctic, literally following the tracks of polar bears. Imagine how hard communicating must be for these creatures—their coats are white, which makes it difficult for them to see each other, they're largely solitary, and they live in a place where you can walk around for days without seeing another living thing, let alone a member of your species.

Dr. Uhlenbroek reveals that bears communicate through aroma. Their paws excrete a long-staying scent, allowing them to leave paw-print "calling cards" behind them.

Visual signs

The desert iguana, a habitué of the Californian desert, also leaves scent marks. To compensate for the scent-destroying hot air, it has a waxy base so that it lasts longer. It's not very good for long-distance communication, however, so the animal uses visual signs to help itself along. The marks are UV absorbent, the desert is not, and the iguana can see UV light.

One of the most interesting segments in the show is on the male sage grouse. The show rigged up a camera to look like a female sage grouse, so that the males could be induced to make their displays. Sound was the communicating tool here, and the sight of a male sage grouse puffing himself up and emitting sounds that could be best described as flatulent screeches was really funny.

In the end, however, what struck us about this entire production were the effort and resources put into it. That television can invest in such worthy projects is a very good deal, indeed!

BUSINESS

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2-month BIR collection up 12.7%

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue, the government's main tax agency, yesterday said its collections in January and February rose 12.7 percent from year-ago.

Its February collection of P31.67 billion, which was up by 10 percent from last year, brought the two-month figure to P73.69 billion, or P8.3 billion higher than last year's level.

The two-month collection represents 66 percent of the BIR's revenue goal for the first quarter of P111.13 billion.

For the whole year, the agency expects its collection to rise by 17 percent, helped by a new law that raised taxes on alcohol and tobacco products, and some administrative measures.

In an interview, Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said the BIR, which accounts for three-fourths of the total government revenue, would likely meet its first-quarter target.

"The rule of thumb is if by the 16th of any month, we already hit more than 50 percent of the target, it's a good indication that we'll hit the target for the whole month because two-third of our

collection comes in the second half with the payment of value added tax and the EFPS (electronic payment and filing systems)," Parayno said.

The BIR started implementing several administrative measures in January and February that promise to boost collections in the coming month. These are as follows:

- the electronic reporting of monthly sales via "texting" or SMS (short messaging system), email and BIR portal;
- the mandatory EFPS for government contractors and their submission of proof of continuing faithful tax compliance as a precondition for supply of goods and

services to the government, and,

- the mandatory submission of BIR-received income tax return and financial returns as condition for obtaining loan from banks.

During the two-month period, the large taxpayers service contributed P40.73 billion or 55.49 percent of the total. This unit surpassed its cumulative collections for the same period last year by P5.14 billion or 14.45 percent.

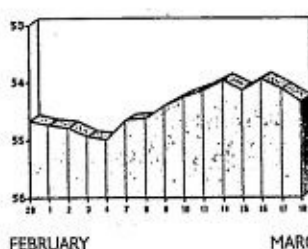
The collection of regional offices grew at a slower rate of 10.57 percent, hitting P32.96 billion or P3.15 billion better than the two-month period a year ago.

"The highly computerized detection system for tax evaders was

2-MONTH/ B3

INDICATORS CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



P 54.340 = \$ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 18, 2005

Y 104.82 = \$ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 18, 2005

GOLD: \$443.80-444.30
per ounce Hong Kong, March 17, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares tumble, close 2.37% lower

SHARE prices closed sharply lower yesterday, falling 2.37 percent on concerns there could be new terrorist attacks following the suppression of a prison revolt led by Islamic militants earlier this week, dealers said.

They said the failure of Congress to pass a key tax law to help remedy a chronic budget deficit also hit sentiment, already unsettled by the prospect of a rise in inflation due to record oil prices.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 49.83 points to 2,050.28 after trading between 2,048.65 and 2,100.11.

Turnover was 3.46 billion shares worth P6.44 billion, largely boosted by transactions in newly-listed Manila Water Co.

The broader all-shares index fell 7.99 points to 1,210.64.

Losers beat gainers 104 to 12, with 32 stocks ending unchanged.

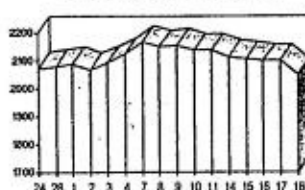
Trade in Manila Water accounted for 60 percent of yesterday's turnover.

Explaining the market downturn, Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities remarked: "We can't help it. Acts of terrorism are probable events and we can only pray that we're not there when any of these happen."

Fears of a terror attack have increased after 22 jailed members of the Abu Sayyaf militant Muslim group were killed after staging a prison uprising earlier this week. Abu Sayyaf leaders have threatened revenge.

AFP

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Manila Water share price up on debut

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MANILA Water Co. Inc., the Ayala-led east zone water distributor, debuted on the stock market yesterday, with its shares closing at P6.90 a share or 6.1 percent higher than the offer price of P6.50.

MWCI is the country's first initial public offering for this year and the first international IPO since 1997.

However, the stock market's sharp fall yesterday spoiled MWCI's maiden trade. The stock opened at P7.50 per share but its gains were trimmed during the trading to close at P6.90 per share. The total value of trade reached P1.28 billion, involving 181 million shares bought and sold.

"The MWCI debut was spoiled by

Senate's apparent failure to get the VAT (value added tax reform) measure done before it goes on recess," Philippine Equity Partners head of research Jojo Gonzales said.

MWCI offered 745.33 million shares consisting of new and previously-owned shares, fetching P4.8 billion.

Company president Antonino Aquino said MWCI would likely increase the issued shares within the next 30 days to bring the offer size to 825 million shares, which would raise for the company P5.4 billion.

Of its total offer, 70 percent was bought by foreign investors while the remaining 30 percent was earmarked for local buyers.

MANILA/ B3



MANILA Water chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala rings the ceremonial bell on the trading floor of the Philippine Stock Exchange to mark the start of yesterday's trading and the listing of the water utility. With him are Trade Secretary Juan Santos (left) and MWCI president Antonino Aquino.

SOUTH FORBES

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BOARD ELECTION

Fireworks seen to mark PSE vote

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FIREWORKS are expected to go off at the Philippine Stock Exchange today when the bourse holds its annual election of board members.

Bitter politicking among the top contending power blocs at the bourse and the issue of non-brokers voting in today's election have been hounding the PSE.

Veteran Makati broker Vivian Yuchengco leads a group that will oppose the power blocs of Manila broker Robert Coyiuto Jr. and PSE chair Alicia Rita Arroyo.

Arroyo is running with Conrado Bate, president of Citiseconline.Com Phils. Inc., and Alejandro Yu of RS Lim & Co.

Arroyo bagged The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (TOWNS) award for business under the stock exchange category.

"My commitment to TOWNS is that I have to work on the category [where I won]," Arroyo told INQUIRER. "My team with Dino Bate and Ali Yu has a business development agenda."

If elected, Arroyo would be serving her third term at the local bourse.

Arroyo has been PSE chair since 2003. Arroyo said she would continue to push for business development "and ensure that reforms are implemented."

Some brokers are questioning Arroyo's nomination, alleging that she does not represent a brokerage firm.

But the PSE nominations and elections committee chair Rodolfo Cruz was quick to come to her defense. He said that the PSE chair, President Macapagal-Arroyo's sister-in-law, is a director of PCIB Securities and therefore qualified to run as PSE director.

Coyiuto has formed an independent group, running with PSE director Eddie Gobing and former PSE president Ramon Garcia.

He denied he has struck an alliance with Arroyo.

Coyiuto told the INQUIRER he is fighting for transparency and good governance.

Yuchengco, on the other hand, is pushing to improve the small investors base of the stock market and for reforms under the Securities Regulation Code governing market participants.

Also yesterday, BA Securities president William Ang questioned the authority of brokerage firm ATR Kim Eng Securities Inc. to vote its shares in the PSE.

Ang, in a letter to the PSE corporate secretary, said that based on the PSE's list of stockholders as of Feb. 24, ATR KE Securities has a total of 1.45 million shares listed under its name. Ang said that since ATR is a PSE broker and legally prohibited from acquiring any PSE shares for its own account, the 1.45 million shares are held on behalf of beneficial owners which should be covered by an SEC order.

The SEC has ordered broker-dealers to submit sub-proxies issued in favor of their clients or a sworn certification stating that the broker-dealers had been authorized by their clients to vote their respective shares accompanied by written authorization from their clients to recognize beneficial ownership.

Ang said ATR merely submitted a "self-serving" certification stating that it has been authorized to vote the clients' shares without the required written authorization from the clients themselves and that it should not be allowed to vote today.

ATR for its part said it has all the necessary documents to vote its shares.

Over the last two years, the PSE elections have been marred by controversies over the election of non-brokers who control a majority of the board.



VIVIAN Yuchengco



ROBERT Coyiuto Jr.



ALICIA Rita Arroyo

San Miguel bent on acquiring Australian food firm

SAN MIGUEL Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage conglomerate, said it was still keen on taking over Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd.

"Importantly, San Miguel's takeover offer for National Foods shares remains open for acceptance. San Miguel Corp. has not changed its intentions in relation to National Foods' business, assets or employees and is not aware of any information material to whether National Foods shareholders should accept San Miguel's offer or not, which has not previously been disclosed in its original bidder's statement," Patrick Riley, director of San Miguel Foods Australia Holdings Pty. said in a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange.

SMC made this disclosure to the ASE following reports it was eyeing the possible entry into New Zealand Dairy Foods, maker of the Anchor milk.

NZDF is reportedly worth as much as NZ\$700 million.

Riley said that should SMC change its mind about taking over National Foods, it would make the proper disclosures with the ASE.

SMC has recently extended its takeover bid for National Foods to April 15 as it considers revising its A\$1.78 billion offer, after rival bidder Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd. hiked its bid to A\$1.84 billion.

"San Miguel Corp. has a long-term strategy of growing its beverages and food businesses in selected countries in the Asia Pacific region. As would be expected, San Miguel Corp. receives proposals for and investigates business development opportunities of all kinds in the region including acquisitions and

commercial arrangements," Riley added.

SMC said it has "given consideration" to buying New Zealand Dairy Foods, which operates in the milk, cheese and yoghurt markets in New Zealand.

SMC added that its studies were still in the preliminary stages.

"Whether or not San Miguel Corp. will proceed with an offer for New Zealand Dairy Foods, and on what terms, is not decided at this point," Riley added.

Sources had said SMC was keen on taking a big slice of the food and beverage markets in Australian and New Zealand as part of its bid to be among Asia Pacific's top 10 companies in three years.

"SMC is in a constant lookout for targets anyway as their objective is to increase foreign exposure," an analyst of a local brokerage firm said.

New Zealand's The Dominion Post, reported that New Zealand's richest man Graeme Hart and owner of NZDF was sounding out potential buyers for the dairy foods group, which owns popular brands like Anchor, Fresh N' Fruity and Fernleaf.

New Zealand Dairy Foods corners nearly half the milk market in New Zealand, about a quarter of the cheese market and a quarter of the yoghurt market, which is the fastest-growing segment of the dairy market.

SMC has announced a number of acquisitions in the region in the past few months but its bid for National Foods, worth roughly A\$1.78 billion, is the biggest so far. Last month it launched a US\$1.8-billion syndicated loan to finance the proposed purchase.

Elizabeth Sanchez

Premiere's planned purchase of Nextel won't push through

By Clarissa S. Batino

PREMIERE Entertainment Productions Inc. yesterday said an agreement forged in March 2004 related to its acquisition of Next Mobile Inc. has lapsed and would not be extended.

PEP entered into a deal with five major shareholders of Next Mobile a year ago.

The deal provided that the five companies would acquire the listed production company by putting its assets into PEP in exchange for shares. In turn, PEP would own Next Mobile, which would have been the radio trunk operator's backdoor listing.

Had the deal between PEP and Nextel pushed through, it would have provided a telecom play for their investors.

A source, however, said that the deal between PEP and Next Mobile had lapsed as early as October 2004.

"At that time, the stock market wasn't doing so well so we saw no need to renew the deal," said a source from Next Mobile.

The same source said that the share swap was doomed from the start given that PEP was classified as a media company and therefore, could not entertain foreign investors. Next Mobile is partly owned by foreign groups.

PEP had forged the agreement last year with Top Mega Enterprises Ltd., Joycelink Holdings Ltd., Gamboa Holdings Inc., Emerald Investment Inc., Foodcamp Industries and Marketing Inc.

These five companies controlled by businessman Mel Velarde also own Next Mobile Inc.

The parties entered into an agreement where the five Next Mobile shareholders shall assign to PEP 13,562,516 common shares of the trunk radio company in exchange for the issuance by PEP of 13,164,210,562 common shares.

Upon completion of the swap, PEP would have owned 97 percent of the outstanding capital stock of Next Mobile. In turn, the Next Mobile shareholders would have controlled 96.2 percent of the outstanding capital stock of the listed production company. "There has been no assignment of Next Mobile shares to PEP and PEP has not issued any shares to the Next Mobile shareholders," Diaz said in a disclosure.

The company wanted to expand its presence in more than 10 key cities in the country. The network's rollout as well as improvement of switches would entail about P1.6 billion.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 18, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.3	26,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	29.5	29.5	28.5	28.5	769,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57	57	57	57	184,000
Citibank Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	50	50	48	48	190,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.75	0.75	5,060,000
International Exch. Bank	19	19	18.75	18.75	540,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37	37	36	37	695,900
Philippine National Bank	38.5	38.5	35	35	44,000
Philippine Trust Co.	29	29	29	29	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	32,500
Security Bank Corp.	31	31	29.5	29.5	522,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	30	30.5	29.5	29.5	35,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Filinvest Fund Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	260	260	260	260	480
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.06	1.06	390,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	154	155	150	150	4,170
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1720	1730	1720	1730	1,840
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	49,500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.24	1.26	5,582,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	910	910	905	905	15,010
Ipeople Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	35,000
Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.055	5,800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	2,800,000
Philippine Tel. Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.4	3.5	9,034,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1460	1460	1450	1455	75,940
Smart Corp.	0.76	0.79	0.76	0.76	3,210,000
Philweb Corp.	0.022	0.022	0.02	0.021	163,200,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	131,300
Manila Electric Co. B	29.5	29.5	28.5	29	641,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.5	7.6	6.8	6.9	180,926,000
Petron Corp.	4.05	4.05	3.95	3.95	5,041,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.52	1.52	1.48	1.48	1,379,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	80,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	171,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	19,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.65	600,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.6	3.7	2,640,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	60,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	350,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.75	3.75	225,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	36	36	36	36	9,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	27.5	60,500
Pancake House Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	74,000
RFM Corp.	0.96	1	0.95	1	480,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	300,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56.5	56	56	111,700
San Miguel Corp. B	83	83.5	81.5	82	87,000
Universal Robina Corp.	12	12	12	12	11,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	230,700,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	25,500,000
Ayala Corp.	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.1	2,840,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.61	0.62	770,000
Alsons Equity Ventures	5.1	5.1	4.95	5	582,000
Alto Holdings Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.049	0.0525	13,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	1,120,000
APC Group Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.42	0.42	3,020,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	63,000,000
Anglo Phil. Holdings Corp.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	770,000
Anglo Prime Res. Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	25,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	40,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.8	0.81	0.79	0.81	140,000
Bancolcon Cons Indus Inc.	25.5	25.5	24	24.5	27,200
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.185	880,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.14	1.16	31,447,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	400,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	5,210,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.5	0.5	0.44	0.45	1,650,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.5	3.5	16,209,000
Fluorvest Dev. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.66	1.66	2,457,000
Phil-Hispania Holdings Corp.	10.25	10.25	9.9	10	1,364,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	59.5	59.5	55.5	55.5	1,264,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	6,300,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.78	1.8	810,000
Ionics Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	33,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.5	3.5	520,000
Macro Asia Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.06	2.1	178,000
Medco Holdings	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	70,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	2,199,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	80,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	130,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	150,000
Mel Pacific Corp.	0.56	0.56	0.52	0.53	45,880,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.55	62,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.34	0.41	0.33	0.34	260,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.35	0.35	1,120,000
Roxa Holdings Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.12	33,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.61	0.61	680,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.77	0.78	0.75	0.75	700,000
Unwired Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	1,300,000
Welltex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.18	0.2	1,190,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	10,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coal Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	510,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	10,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.66	130,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	221,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.86	120,000
Pico Resources Inc.	0.135	0.14	0.135	0.14	10,450,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.36	1.38	8,824,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1	1.02	5,335,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	7,192,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	3,910,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	17	17	16	16	391,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.1	9.2	8.7	8.7	3,733,000
Arantea Properties Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	110,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	591,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	700,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	5,890,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.2	0.2	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.52	0.53	16,430,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.84	1.84	1.74	1.76	4,176,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	140,000
Kiuck Phil. Properties	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	600,000
Fit-Estate Land Inc.	0.67	0.78	0.67	0.77	3,320,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.22	0.22	1,000,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.195	0.2	0.19	0.19	950,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	840,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	1.78	1.78	1.74	1.74	7,171,000
SM Development Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	840,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.4	8.4	8	8	7,171,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	160,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	84,500,000
Altas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	777,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.2	33,000
Benguet Corp. B	15	15	15	15	15,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. B	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.38	9,940,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.43	0.43	0.4	0.41	6,430,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.018	60,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.025	152,000
Phenico Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	1,458,000
Phlox Mining Corp. A	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	1,344,000
Phlox Mining Corp. B	1.48	1.48	1.42	1.42	3,750,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.35	0.36	2,643,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.32	0.32	0.29	0.29	100,000
OTHERS					
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	4,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	3,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	7,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	27,000,000
Pacific	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	13,014,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	100,000
Sinopharm Corp.	0.215	0.215	0.2	0.2	12,580,000
Unilever Ind.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	5,000,000

2-month BIR collection up 12.7%

From page B1

likewise intensified which supports collection recovery effort and the filing of criminal charges against tax evaders," the BIR said in a statement.

The BIR added that President Macapagal-Arroyo would launch within this month the BIR-BSP (Boy Scout of the Philippines) and Coalition Against Corruption of the "Operation Dikit" where some 600,000 boy scouts all over the country would affix BIR stickers in an estimated one million cash register and point of sales machines to ensure the monthly submission of gross receipts from these machines.

The boy scouts will be deputized by the BIR as tax police and will be tapped to distribute flyers explaining the mechanics of the electronics sales reporting system.

Manila

From page B1

After the offering, the Ayala group's interest in the utility firm slid to 30.2 percent from 45.12 percent. The holdings of the International Finance Corp. fell to 7.4 percent from 12.32 percent and that of Mitsubishi Corp. fell to 7.9 percent from 13.13 percent. Britain's United Utilities raised its common shareholdings to 11.7 percent from 9.01 percent. It also holds preferred shares in the firm equivalent to 16.7 percent.

"It is truly an honor for Manila Water to be the country's first international IPO listing since 1997. We feel this is very significant because it signals renewed confidence of international investors in the Philippine equities market and in the country's overall outlook," MWCI chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala said yesterday.

"We believe we managed to go in at the right time," Aquino said in a briefing with reporters last Thursday.

Aquino said the company's international roadshow, the country's first IPO roadshow since 1997 generated \$910 million worth of orders, or 15 times oversubscribed.

The primary offer raised about P3.6 billion in new funds for MWCI, which will be used for capital investment and expansion plans, Aquino said.

The cash inflow will be used to finance continued improvements in its concession and its pipe-laying programs in the next few years.

MWCI will spend about P3 billion this year, almost the same as its budget for capital expenditure in the previous years.

Aquino said MWCI would undertake expansion in the Northern part of Manila (Montalban, San Mateo), East (Taytay, Cainta, Antipolo, Binangonan, Baras, Hala-Hala), and the South (Taguig, Pateros).

MWCI controls the east zone which covers major business districts such as Makati City, most of Quezon City, Pasig City, Marikina, San Juan, Taguig and Mandaluyong City.

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LANCER 1.6 MX CVT	838,000	120,600	22,315	15,608	14,195
ADVENTURE GLX DSL (9 seater)	740,000	115,000	19,706	13,782	12,535
ADVENTURE GLS SPORT GAS M/T	795,000	139,000	21,170	14,807	13,467
ADVENTURE GLS SPORT DSL	805,000	141,000	21,436	14,993	13,636
ADVENTURE GRAND SPORT DSL	935,000	152,000	24,898	17,414	15,839

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

Why Filipinos should go herbal

Text and photo by Charles E. Buban

SEN. Juan Flavio Vea has seen a glimpse of the future of Philippine medicine, and it carries a piece of good news for those who have a garden filled with a vast assortment of medicinal plants like guava, *lagundi* and garlic.

The former health secretary says Filipinos should start growing these plants in their backyard and use them for minor medical emergencies like cleaning wounds and curing common illnesses (like cough, headache, stomachache and fever).

"The practice of traditional medicine—which was passed on from generation to generation—has a large significance in today's healthcare delivery, considering the expensive medical treatment that one-third of the country's population of roughly 84 million could not afford," says Flavio.

Flavio says patronizing local, traditional and alternative medicines can help address the rising cost of western medicine and medical care.

"Abundant and readily available, traditional and alternative healthcare is an extremely attractive option that should be considered," he says.

Flavio stresses that doctors and pharmaceutical companies have nothing to be alarmed about this idea considering that this will primarily benefit the one-third of the country's population.

'Albulario'

Flavio says he realized the importance of alternative medicine when, as a young barrio doctor, he discovered that majority of his patients went first to the neighborhood *albulario* (medicine man) before going to him.



FLAVIO

He found out later that a significant percentage of what the *albuarios* were doing had scientific basis.

He says: "I thought, why not refine their knowledge of herbal medicine and use it as one of the basis in developing the country's alternative medical care?"

Over the years, the use of herbal medicine has gained acceptance in the mainstream drug market.

With the passage of the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act of 1997 (which Flavio authored), the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (Pitahc) was created under the Department of Health to oversee and promote the use of herbal medicine in the country.

At present, Pitahc owns and operates four herbal pharmaceutical and processing plants, which have been in existence for almost 18 years. These plants, located in the cities of Tuguegarao, Tacloban, Davao and Cotabato, manufacture three

herbal medicines: *lagundi*, *sambong* and *tsaang-gubat*.

Herbal ads

Since then, private manufacturers of herbal-based supplements and other similar products have flourished.

Today, advertisements touting the "wonders" of herbal products—from relieving common ailments like cough, abdominal pain, asthma, fever to helping control diabetes mellitus, cholesterol and uric acid levels—are ever-present in television, radio, newspapers and magazines.

In fact, one herbal product manufacturer, ABS Bitter Herbs, became the first Filipino herbal supplement company to receive a quality certification from the National Sanitation Foundation of the United States (a collaborating center designated by the World Health Organization for food and water safety and indoor environment).

Flavio is not surprised by the developments. He points out that drugs have been derived from plants for at least 3,000 years, and a considerable percentage of today's prescription drugs still are.

Flavio says many of the synthetic drugs today originated from plants at some point.

"Clearly, plant-based medications can be dependable and effective," he says, adding that most herbal products don't have any side effects.

"They come from natural sources, unlike artificial and synthetic medicines that may have dangerous side effects," explains Flavio.

Room for improvement

Flavio, however, admits that the development of herbal medicine in the country still has a lot of room for improvement, with thousands of medicinal plants still awaiting scientific testing.



"But we could concentrate on the 10 medicinal plants already studied. As a matter of fact, Pitahc is now completing the third phase of clinical trials for *ampalaya* and the documentation of different indigenous healing modalities," says the senator.

As early as 1993, the DOH identified 10 medicinal plants for promotion from an original list of more than a thousand medicinal plants.

These are *lagundi* for cough and asthma, *sambong* as diuretic to prevent kidney stones, *tsaang-gubat* for abdominal pains and as antispasmodic agent, *yerba buena* for fever and body aches, *niyogan* for ascariasis, *bayabas* (guava) for wound infection, *akapulko* for skin

infections, *ulasimang bato* for arthritis and gout, *bawang* (garlic) to lower cholesterol and *ampalaya* for diabetes mellitus.

Flavio has a word of caution on the use of herbal supplements and products.

"The rule of thumb is to stick with those products that have been tested for safety and effectiveness by competent bodies," he says.

Yesterday, Flavio launched the First Philippine Herbal Health Forum in Quezon City as a venue for the discussion of the herbal supplement industry in the country. He is supported in this endeavor by the Bureau of Food and Drugs, Pitahc and the Philippine College for the Advancement of Medicine.

God('s) genes

Part 1

IN AN OLD episode of "Stargate SG-1," Hanson, the former commander of the SG-9 team, tries to explain why he felt compelled to interfere with the lives of the people on one of the worlds they visited. Unable to walk in sunlight because the sun's radiation is deadly, the natives are cave dwellers who hunt and forage only at night, and their population is multiplying.

Hanson decides that he has to inspire them—by words or cruel treatment—to build a temple where they can worship him as their god and which will also serve as additional housing for the people.

You can't play God, protests series regular Major Carter.

Hanson holds up a worn copy of the Bible and tells her that he's been carrying it with him wherever he goes, searching for God. "And here I am," he concludes.

Searching for God

All over the world, many people believe that there is a higher power or force, someone or something

who hears their prayers, brings peace and contentment into their lives, and makes miracles possible.

In his book, "The God Gene," which was published last year, Dr. Dean Hamer proposes that man constantly searches for God because his genes make him yearn for such contact.

He notes that man has had spiritual beliefs "since the dawn of our species." Greek myths attributed many natural events to gods and goddesses. Ancient Egyptians entombed their dead with food so they wouldn't get hungry as they crossed into the afterlife. The stone army of Chinese soldiers that now reside in Xian guarded their Emperor even after his death.

Nature vs nurture

Dr. Hamer is a molecular biologist. He is chief of the Gene Structure and Regulation Section at the Center for Cancer Research, which is part of the National Cancer Institute. According to his webpage, he has studied for the last several years the role of genetics in people's behavior, attempting

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon



to determine how much of someone's personality, words and actions are due to genetics (i.e., nature) and how much is due to his environment (i.e., nurture).

But Dr. Hamer is perhaps best known for his work on the so-called "gay gene," based on his paper in Science a decade ago titled "A linkage between DNA markers on the X chromosome and male sexual orientation."

Given his credentials, if this man can find a link between a man's genes and his sexual preferences, and find a link between one's smoking habits and genes, then maybe he has truly found a similar relationship between one's need to be at peace with the cosmos and his genes.

Copyrighted neurons

Dr. Hamer wasn't the only one who decided to look for God last year using the scientific method. Jonathon Keats, although not a scientist, has written two novels, one of which is coming out later this year, and has written articles for The New York Times, Wired and Artweek.

He is a conceptual artist; two years ago for his "Brain Trust" exhibit, he took a stab at the notion of immortality. He copyrighted his mind by registering his brain as something he had built neuron by neuron and offered his neurons, and the original thoughts that came with them, much like start-up companies offer stock to potential investors.

A mere \$10 for one million neurons, he told those who went to the gallery where his "exhibit" resided in the prospectus that came with MRI images of his brain as he pondered topics such as art, life and death, and there were six billion neurons at stake.

Of course, the buyers couldn't actually get his neurons; the

copyright lasts the duration of his lifetime plus 70 years, and Keats isn't transferring the copyright until his death.

Taxonomy project

Last year, in a project called "Divine Taxonomy," Keats decided to try to find out how close people are to God. Like Dr. Hamer, he set out to identify certain genes.

Unlike Dr. Hamer though, he did not want to find God; rather, Keats wanted to know what God's genes looked like. He thought that God, or *Divineus deus* as he calls Him (he made up the name in order to go along with the Linnaean system of classification), would fall under one of the three main branches on the tree of life—Eucarya, Bacteria, or Archaea—but wasn't sure which one.

With the help of several scientists, he came up with an answer in time for the exhibition his gallery (Modernism Inc. in San Francisco) held last September.

The search for God will continue next week with a look at Hamer and Keats' methodologies.

How to avoid food poisoning

By Willie T. Ong, MD, MPH
Contributor

"150 PEOPLE hospitalized after eating cheese sandwich in an office party." "27 schoolchildren in Bohol die after eating street food."

Like terrorists, deadly bacteria and toxins are lying in wait to strike you. Brought by your favorite waiter or sold at your local *carinderia*, these invisible microbes may be hiding in your favorite *buko* salad, *pancit canton* or cassava cake. Food poisoning could hurt, maim, even kill.

Here are 10 tips to avoid becoming a victim:

1. **Avoid or limit eating mayonnaise- and milk-based foods.** Especially during hot weather, the first food to get spoiled are those with milk, mayo and cheese. If you can't avoid the temptation, just take in a small scoop so that in case it's bacteria-infested, you'll still survive to tell the tale.

2. **Use your senses.** First, the nose knows. If the food smells funny, fishy or foul, don't eat it. Second, use your taste buds. If the seafood *pancit canton* tastes like an eight-legged vermin, spit it out. Cockroaches have a way of getting themselves into cooked food. Third, seeing is believing. Look inside vegetable leaves and overripe mangoes for

those white, crawly maggots. And make sure that dark spot on the meat is black pepper, not vermin eggs.

Tapeworms

3. **Avoid poorly cooked meat.** Some people feel sophisticated when they order a rare steak. But there's nothing special in having tapeworms living in your gut similar to that in "Aliens." And despite what others say, the parasites in the *kilawin* or sushi cannot be killed by vinegar or wasabi. So the next time you order your steak, have it "well done."

4. **Choose very hot items over cold food.** Studies show that the Chinese have less incidence of stomach disorders compared to the Japanese. Experts think this is because the Chinese like their tea, rice and food piping hot, unlike the Japanese with their cold sushi and sashimi. Hot chicken soup warms the stomach but reheated food is a no-no.

5. **Choose dry over wet food.** Wet food items spoil faster than dry ones. Limit eating sauces, like *bagoong*, gravy and taco sauce. Fried chicken, fried pork chop and grilled fish take a long time to spoil. These are the perfect items to bring to your summer outings. Food items with milky sauces and exposed to the hot weather rot quickly.



Rice: plain or fried?

6. **Take a few safe dishes only.** You have been in this situation before. A friend invites you to his humble home where a caterer has prepared eight dishes. Suddenly, you notice a few flies feasting on the *dinuguan* and the sweaty waiters are pouring soup in plastic gallons. How can you be courteous to your host while avoiding an upset stomach?

Answer: Play the percentages. In a food poisoning outbreak, there is usually just one spoiled food. Given eight suspicious delicacies, just take in more of the safer items and avoid or limit doubtful items. For fillers, plain rice is much safer than fried rice.

7. **Order vegetables in safe places only.** Vegetables are rich in vitamins

and healthy fiber but the problem lies in food preparation. The infamous Typhoid Mary, so named because she carried the typhoid bacteria in her stools, killed her employers by insisting on preparing vegetable salads with poorly washed hands. Typhoid, parasites and other microbes are very prevalent and lie untreated in many Filipinos.

8. **Only bottled or canned drinks, please.** Tap water is dangerous. Leaky Tondo water pipes gave rise to the cholera outbreak in 2003, killing eight people. To be safe, use bottled, boiled or distilled drinks only, like bottled water or canned soft drinks. And since ice is made from tap water, use a straw or drink straight from the can instead. For *sago* and *gulaman* lovers, check if distilled or tap water is used.

9. **Avoid or limit street food.** For *kwak-kwak*, fish balls and "dirty" ice cream fanatics, I have some bad news. They are called "dirty" for a reason. The sauces are a haven for bacteria: the mouth-watering *bagoong* for the green mango and the recycled fish ball sauce where everybody dips in delight. I must admit though, I do enjoy a hot *taho* every now and then.

Ideally, food handlers must pass stringent tests of their blood, urine and stools, but who would shoulder the additional cost? Thus, choose where and whom you buy your food from. And unless it's a hotel, a well-known fast-food chain, or a respected restaurant, be forewarned.

10. **Eat home-cooked meals.** Mother or wife knows best. Eating at home is safest if you take a few precautions. Like refrigerating leftover meals as soon as possible and discarding them in a few days.

Finally, remember the basic rule: wash your hands before and after eating.

So eat safe, eat smart and avoid food poisoning. Clean food items may cost a bit more, but it's better to be safe than sorry.

(E-mail comments to willietong@netasia.net)

Obesity: A rising medical concern

By Dianne M. Villafuerte

FORGET about avian flu and meningococemia, an epidemic is fast rising. And we're not talking about a regional epidemic here, this one's worldwide.

"Whether you call it a tragedy or whether you call it an imminent danger for health, obesity definitely has become a worldwide epidemic, a huge epidemic," said Dr. Luc Van Gaal, a professor of medicine from the department of diabetology, clinical nutrition and metabolism of the University Hospital of Antwerp, Belgium.

Van Gaal was in the country to speak during a press conference organized by Abbott Laboratories and the Philippine Association on the Study of Overweight and Obesity (Pasoo).

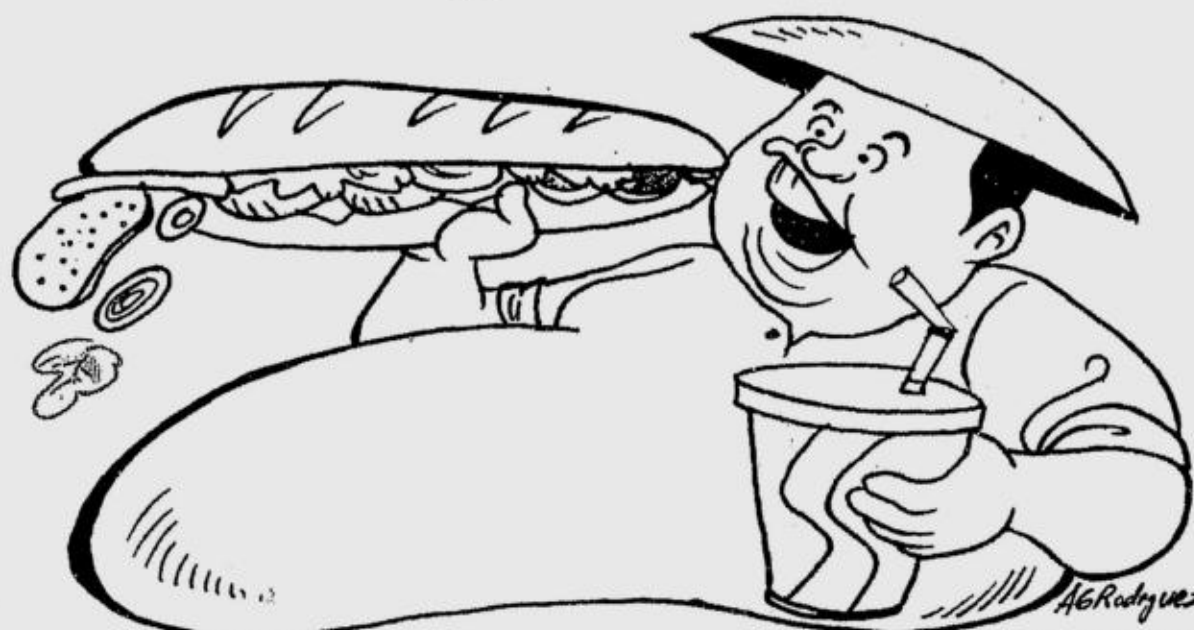
In the United States alone, Van Gaal pointed out, more than half of the population is overweight.

"[But] this is true not only in the United States but also in Asian countries," added the professor.

25% of Filipinos obese

"We at Pasoo have tagged obesity as the terror of the new millennium because it directly affects 7 percent of the world adult population," said Dr. Ramon Abarquez, president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension.

According to Abarquez, preliminary data from the National Nutrition Health study show that obesity among Filipinos, based on World Health Organization criteria, is about 24.7 percent, almost three



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

times of what was expected on the adult global population.

Even health providers, particularly doctors, are not spared. There is an obesity prevalence of 21 percent among medical practitioners.

It is not only the rich who have the tendency to get overweight and obese. Abarquez said the risk of obesity among patients who consulted the hypertension clinic of the Philippine General Hospital was at 24 percent. In addition, the families of these patients had an obesity risk of 21 percent.

"Obesity is not necessarily an individual problem, it can be a family affair,"

Abarquez pointed out.

Creating awareness

Because obesity is not like communicable diseases that show immediate symptoms, it has crept in almost unnoticed. It is therefore imperative for the government and the public to have an increased awareness about this medical condition and be prepared to address this issue.

Abarquez emphasized: "A joint effort of Pasoo, government and nongovernment sectors, medical practitioners, the pharmaceutical industry and the society is necessary to effectively create a higher

level of awareness regarding the hazards of the terror related to obesity."

Diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease and cancer are just a few of the risks that being overweight and obese bring about.

Van Gaal noted that the WHO and the International Diabetes Foundation have projected that in the next 15 to 20 years, there would be approximately 300 million diabetics worldwide.

He warned that the Asian region would likely have the highest increase in the prevalence of new cases of type 2 diabetes due to the increasing number of people being overweight or obese.

Life expectancy

According to Van Gaal, life expectancy is reduced by three to seven years especially if one is 40 and is either overweight or obese.

On the other hand, a 10 percent weight loss reduces the overall risk for diabetes, coronary heart disease and even death by 25 percent.

Van Gaal said a country's healthcare system should take an active role in informing people that obesity is a health issue and that the various approaches to reducing weight should be done and followed in a correct, scientific way.

"Too often, patients are exposed to messages given in magazines that do not always have scientific backgrounds," said Van Gaal.

While Van Gaal cautioned against relying on "magic" pills which claim to help one lose weight faster and easier, he acknowledged that there are drugs, like sibutramine, that have undergone clinical trials and been carefully evaluated.

Sibutramine is an extensively studied prescription medication for the treatment of obesity. Prescribed for those who have a body mass index starting at 30, its focal point is the brain, increasing the patient's feeling of fullness, which in turn reduces his or her food intake.

Van Gaal and Abarquez, however, emphasized that sibutramine should only be used as an add-on therapy for patients and there has to be lifestyle modification. Use of the drug may have side effects such as dry mouth, palpitations and increase in blood pressure so patients should be closely monitored and evaluated by doctors.

News on the local science front

TO CHEER ourselves up, let us look at snippets of developments here in the Philippines.

First, locally produced essential oils can now be optimally developed to maximize analgesic activity.

Researchers from the Chemicals and Minerals Division of the Industrial Technology Development Institute studied seven oils: lemon grass, citronella, eucalyptus, ginger, guava, and cinnamon bark and leaves. The team—composed of R. C. Torres, M. A. Villanueva, F. M. Sison, P. M. Cuasay, C. O. Manalo, E. C. Monroyo, E. A. Lanto, R. R. Estrella, E. L. Arrogante, I. B. Mendoza, R. Banal and C. L. Melo—tested the effects of these oils on rats.

Results showed that ginger oil extract exhibited the highest analgesic activity, followed by lemon grass oil, cinnamon leaf oil, guava and eucalyptus. The team then made greaseless gel and liniment, massage oil and balm with these natural essential oils and plant extracts.

Their products are a cheaper alternative to imported analgesics. For details, call the Institute at 8372071 to 82, loc. 2226, or fax loc. 2216, or e-mail cmd@dst.gov.ph.

Bio-2T

Second, the Clean Air Act might finally become a reality.

In cooperation with the Department of Energy, Philippine Coconut Authority, and Technological University of the Philippines, the Institute launched a project to develop plant-based oil derivatives for motorcycles and tricycles. Their target is the Bio-2T, which hopefully can substitute for the unmodified two-stroke spark ignition motorcycle engines which are major culprits in polluting our air.

Janitor fish

Third, the janitor fish is actually pretty clean. Rumor has it that the fish is harmful to cages in Laguna de Bay and rivers such as Marikina.

EUREKA!

Queen N. Lee-Chua



According to the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research and Development, the janitor fish is an imported freshwater catfish species native to South America, but came here as an aquarium fish in the last decade.

Why janitor fish? It assiduously cleans the aquarium by eating algae growing on the edges.

According to Rodel Offemaria of the Science and Technology Media Service: "The janitor fish, which grows to 30 cm long, feeds on algae and small crustaceans. Its spines are not poisonous and

its flesh is edible. It was previously bred in ponds in Laguna but has escaped into Laguna de Bay and nearby river systems.

"It digs up holes on pond dikes and river embankments for its breeding nests. When feeding on algae growing on the nets of fish cages in Laguna de Bay, the janitor fish's rasping mouth can cause jagged cuts to the net that may result in the breakout of cultured fish.

"Not valued as a food fish, the janitor fish however can be utilized as a fishmeal source and fish leather making because of its unique and hideous-looking skin."

Rope from plant

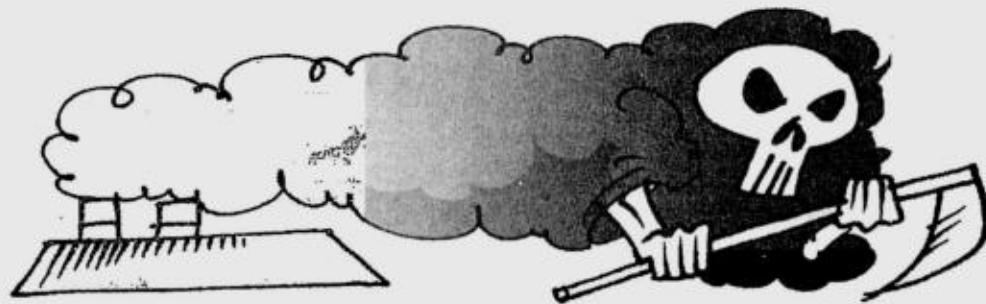
Last, a sedge plant has worked wonders for the residents of Barangay Parasan in Zamboanga del Sur. The grass-like plant, lampacanay, grows wildly in fishponds in Pangasinan Bay.

The local Rope Makers Association, with 1,000 members, braid lampacanay from two to six mm, and form them into baskets, bags, and furniture trimmings for export to Cebu. Twelve tons are reportedly bought and sold in a month, with a total value of P50,000.

Fiber experts Charito Cauton and Laarni Habal of the Philippine Textile Research Institute recently conducted training to improve the quality and color of the products. Training, sponsored by the Molave town government and the Fiber Development Authority, included extracting dyes from young coconut, yellow ginger and atsuetse.

According to provincial science and technology officer Ebenezer Tulog, "Parasan's rope industry dates back to the 1950s that involved every household in the barangay. The shift to lampacanay came after the town's abaca plantations drastically shrank as a result of a crippling banana bunchy top disease."

Hopefully this plant is hardier. E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.



Air pollution: Killing us softly

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

(Conclusion)

VARIOUS government agencies have been harping about their efforts to control air pollution because of its health and environmental hazards. One wonders though: how can one effectively control it without an accurate way to monitor it?

To our knowledge, no long-term, continuous monitoring program is managed by the government or any of its agencies to assess the types and levels of pollutants in the air, to assess trends as air quality degrades, or to provide any sort of health warnings during specific months.

However, there is enough data to confirm that the situation poses a serious health risk and is getting worse.

Data collected in relation to the Asian Development Bank-financed Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement project clearly demonstrate that the levels of pollutants in the air are well above levels that commonly affect human health.

The 1997 ADB data were generated at eight air quality monitoring stations located in some of the most polluted and traffic-heavy intersections in Metro Manila.

Comprising the 2001 data were off-spot readings on a given day at ADB household locations within selected residential subdivisions.

Pollutants measured include PM-10, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxide (NO₂) and ozone (O₃). Lead

measurements were not carried out, as specific filters were not available. The test results were so alarmingly high that they could put an air pollution expert at his wit's end.

Most of the air pollutants generally, and in some locations very significantly exceeded US, WHO

MEDICAL FILES

and Philippine air quality standards. Outdoor air quality was significantly better in areas outside

Metro Manila, such as Antipolo and Laguna. If it's any consolation, at least there are still places within reach that are still a little friendly to our lungs.

Burning problem

A new and very hazardous twist to the problem is the indiscriminate burning of garbage around the metropolis, which emits particularly noxious and dangerous pollutants into the air.

Garbage burning has been witnessed on a large scale along C-5, on Roxas Boulevard, on Commonwealth Avenue leading to Payatas. Across the city, in the backyards and curbs of homes, residents are solving their household garbage problem by burning them. It is particularly insidious that the burning of plastic that contains chlorine molecules produces cancer-causing dioxins—the toxins of Agent Orange—and furans, substances very dangerous to human health.

The population of Metro Manila has rapidly grown over the past three decades and now stands at more than 12 million, with some

12,600 people to each square kilometer. Thousands live in the shadow of power stations or industrial plants. Smog smothers our already suffocated lungs and constantly blankets the city; 2.2 million motor vehicles form traffic jams; and pedestrians cope in vain by keeping their handkerchiefs clamped over their mouths and noses.

No easy task

Solving the problem of air pollution will not be an easy task. But unless government exercises some political will, unless the millions of vehicle owners take it upon themselves to make sure their vehicles do not belch a lot of fumes, unless our businessmen do not abdicate their responsibility to ensure that their factories do not spew out toxic gases, and unless ordinary citizens of Metro Manila refuse to accept the worsening air pollution as an inevitable take-it-or-live-it part of city living, then it will remain a big problem and it will get frighteningly worse year after year.

It's sad that much of the insult on the environment is of man's making, the same human being tasked with its upkeep and preservation. We hope we can all turn in to environmental advocates. Otherwise, the resulting scenario is far from reassuring. Neglect of the environment and the polluted air in our midst will lull the metropolis to sleep like an overdose of a general anesthetic. Our own apathy will make sure that we, our children and our children's children will pay for it dearly.

Common food myths exposed

First of two parts

SOME beliefs about food have been repeated so often that they have been taken for granted as "facts" by the public, even though they actually don't have any truth to them. Other myths are simply believed in by people who want to rationalize that their diet is healthy.

Read on and find out which of the following food myths may have had you fooled.

• **Taking supplements of vitamins and minerals will give you the energy you need throughout the day.**

While vitamins and minerals are called supplements for a reason, also known as micronutrients, they are essential to the

proper functioning of our body's organs, generating new cells and warding off disease. They enhance the body's health but shouldn't be relied on as a primary source of energy.

If you really want energy throughout the day, you should eat food rich in macronutrients—carbohydrates, proteins and fats—the main source of energy for our body. Carbohydrates are the body's fuel and give energy to our cells, and they are used up so quickly they have to be constantly replenished.

Very important meal

• **If you miss breakfast, you can make it up by eating a heavy lunch.**

If your body were a car, missing breakfast would be like trying to drive on an empty gas tank. It is a very important meal because while we're asleep throughout the night, we are also "fasting" for an average of about eight hours—and it's important to our health that we "break" this fast.

People who skip breakfast think they can easily catch up on their energy requirements later in the day by eating a heavier lunch, but the truth is they're unlikely to get all the vitamins, minerals and energy-giving macronutrients a simple breakfast provides, making them sluggish the entire day. A person who misses breakfast tends to snack on food high in sugar or fat by mid-morning, wreaking havoc



on that person's diet.

Skipping the first meal of the day makes you gain weight, not lose it. If you don't have time to cook breakfast, try a quick bowl of instant noodles instead—it's macronutrient rich and better than facing the morning on an empty stomach.

• **Organically grown foods are superior to other foods.**

Since organic farmers avoid pesticides, use natural soil enhancers such as compost instead

of fertilizers and rotate crops more frequently, people say organic food products have fewer health hazards and are more nutritious. But research indicates that pesticide levels are almost the same in organically and conventionally grown foods, so nutritional scientists disagree that organic is far healthier. Soil nutrients from natural fertilizers such as animal manure are the same as chemical fertilizers, so there are no real nutritional differences.

ASK THE DENTIST

Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Crowns

ARE crowns without metal strong enough?

If you are referring to all-porcelain individual crowns, meaning they are separate and you can floss between them, then from my experience these crowns are strong enough. If you are talking about most all-porcelain crowns connected to each other carrying other floating crowns like a fixed bridge, then they are prone to break under strong chewing forces of the mouth.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

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 BLK2 LOT2 7361925

MARIKINA

BNew 2-stry 2 Blg BR w/ Grge
 Tierra Vista Subd. 9460309

QUEZON CITY

BRAND NEW 3BR malids rm
 3TB 116sqm 1st St. cor. #8
 Gilmore Ave. New Mla. CQ 28K
 Volvy/Tintin 5277616

NICE CONDO: 3BR, 3TB
 Maids Room w/TB, Secured
 913-7267 • 913-7270 - Roy

Studio Type 30m² Nr Fvlew &
 Mkt PAT 7161855 0917655772

APARTMENT

MANILA

1 & 2BR STA. ANA 5634007

MANDALUYONG

2 Units-Hlway Hills 8212091

QUEZON CITY

2BR UID 1TB STRG WATER
 w/ parking Call 9117130

34 YALE CUBAO 9310449

7T scnd Fema Rd Proj- 9252180

SAN JUAN

9 J Eustaquio Alg N.Domingo
 2BR 820-2481/825-0342

A.LUNA ST 2story spacious
 P9T/mo good locn 6461603

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CRYPTON TECHNOLOGY (THAILAND) Co., Ltd.

Technical Sales Engineer

Requirements:
 - Bachelor's degree in Electronics Engineering or related field
 - 1 to 2 years experience, preferably in power supply design or manufacturing
 - must have strong electronics design background
 - Excellent interpersonal & communication skills with good command in English

We offer attractive salary package and career opportunity to successful candidate. Interested persons are invited to send fax or email an application letter with a detailed resume to:

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FOR SALE****TRANSPORTATION
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FROM THE SWEDISH BOAT BUILDER NIMBUS. 34 FT 2 AIRCONS WITH FLYBRIDGE, AUTOPILOT, 240 hp TWIN VOLVO DIESEL TURBO PENTA ENGINES, 2 STATE ROOMS, BOW THRUSTER, SHOWER HEAD, REF., COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM, MICROWAVE, 2 COLOR GPS CHART-PLOTTERS, UHF, RADIO, GENERATOR SET, RADAR, SONAR, 2 FLAT SCREENS.
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**GENERAL
ITEMS FOR SALE****BILLIARDS**

26T New Comp. Sr Impl 7767907

Sale/Rental/Service 8014494

Sale/Rental/Service 8014494

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ELITE PIANO CENTER
Almost New:TERMS-7213124**PETS**

COLLIE PUPS TEL # 6456344

DALMTN champion w/papers
09183921360 Las Pines area

DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

Dog Trainer 0919-2050952

Germ Shepherd Fem 11mos
Bigbone ShowType Good 4
Breeding • 0917-8516885Golden Ret. Pups Ph Champ
sire 5530677- 09178540472

*PUGS-WRINKLED 3725231

ROTTWEILER PUPS Champin
0917-8898239 / 0917-8372007

Stud Grl Dane 09178266182

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**PUBLIC
NOTICES****ANNOUNCEMENT**WE BUY OLD HOUSES
READY FOR DEMOLITION
951-1306 ; 0927-7115000**LEGAL NOTICE**Notice is hereby given that the
extra-judicial settlement with waiver
of rights of estate of the late
BENJAMIN PAGSISIHAN is
made and entered among his heirs
as per Doc No. 402, Page No. 81,
Book 22, Series of 2005 under
Notary Public Atty. Nelson Lujano
of Alabang.
(PDI - March 5, 12 & 19, 2005)**NOTICE OF LOSS**Notice is hereby given that stock
certificate No. 50820 issued by Ayala
Corp for 178,050 shares of Aysa
Lourdes Tong has been reported
lost. (PDI-March 5, 12 & 19, 2005)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

**SPC DISPOSAL COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION**

Notice is hereby given that the Security Plant Complex, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will sell used lot (Bidder must be DENR accredited transporter and trader), serviceable/used and unserviceable equipment such as Cleaver Brooks Packaged Boiler and Incinerator for general refuse and aluminum and GI scrap items thru sealed bids which must be received by the SPC Disposal Committee not later than 10:00 a.m. on 28 March 2005 at Room 504, 5th Floor, Building A, BSP Security Plant Complex, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

Interested parties may inspect the said items during regular working days from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at the BSP Security Plant Complex before 28 March 2005.

Auction forms and other information may be obtained from the SPC Disposal Committee's Secretary, Ms. Digna Z. Batalla at Room 305, 3rd Floor, Building A, BSP Security Plant Complex, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Tel. No. 926-3464.

(Sgd.) ORLANDO B. ASIDDAO
Chairman

(PDI - March 19, 2005)

**GENERAL
ITEMS FOR SALE****PETS**

PCCI
PLEASE BE
INFORMED
THAT THE
SCHEDULED
DOG WALK FOR
A CAUSE
ON MARCH
20, 2005
HAS BEEN MOVED
TO MAY 8, 2005

**PUBLIC
NOTICES****NOTICE OF LOSS**

Notice is hereby given of
the lost Petron Stock
Certificate Nos.
388454 1000 shares;
694978 250 shares;
120635 313 shares;
1423030 313 shares;
issued under the name of
LEOPOLDO SARMIENTO
TRIA as per Doc. 271
Page 55 Book I Series
2002 before Notary Public
Atty. Ferdinand Secar of
Pasig City.
(PDI-March 19, 2005)

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OPPORTUNITIES****BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES**INCREASE your Income!
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Prime Loc., Pique 600sqm Fine
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4007937**MALE/FEMALE**BSP•BSN•PT•MT
Any Allied Health Grade
up to P45T/ Mol 8922818

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Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on March 30, 2005, 2:00 p.m., 12th Floor, Suite 5, of the DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM SELLING PRICE
REAL ESTATE			
METRO MANILA			
AM-JA-031a	Aguirre Ave., cor. Ortigas St., BF Homes, Parañaque City	956 m ² two (2) adjoining residential/commercial lots (TCT Nos. T-126671 & T-126672) with school bldg. and imp.	P 18,935,000.00
AM-JA-031b	R. Tirone cor. T. Teodoro St., BF Homes, Parañaque City	787 m ² two (2) adjoining residential lots (TCT Nos. T-126673 & T-126674) with bldg. & imp.	P 9,057,000.00
BAG-01	Florence Townhomes IV, 13th Avenue, Brgy. Socorro, Murphy, Quezon City	81.60 m ² residential lot (TCT No. T-268283) with bldg. & imp.	P 2,019,100.00
AM-CP-032	1304 Int. M. Naval St., Navotas	338 m ² vacant residential/industrial lot (TCT No. C-300082)	P 506,000.00
BATANGAS			
AM-MC-033	San Felix, Sto. Tomas	1,672 m ² three (3) adjoining unfilled residential lots (TD Nos. 009-1676R, 009-01679R & 009-01678R) with bldg. & imp.	P 2,214,240.00
AM-MC-034	Liza Compound, Poblacion IV, San Roque, Sto. Tomas	325 m ² residential lot (TCT No. T-89539) with bldg. & imp.	P 1,139,200.00
BULACAN			
AM-CP-035	Sio. Niño St., Poblacion, Bustos	2,593 m ² industrial/residential lot (TCT T-170606) with bldg. & imp.	P 5,828,200.00
CABANATUAN			
AM-PY-036	Vista Amor Subd., Bangad	Residential lots with bldg. & imp.	
AM-PY-037	Lot - 27 Bk - 2	100 m ² TCT No. T-118071	P 466,600.00
AM-PY-038	19 2	100 m ² TCT No. T-118074	P 432,900.00
AM-PY-039	15 1	100 m ² TCT No. T-118073	P 432,800.00
AM-PY-040	13 2	100 m ² TCT No. T-118072	P 432,800.00
AM-PY-040	11 1	100 m ² TCT No. T-118075	P 432,800.00
CAVITE			
AM-ED-041	Sterling Technopark, Bo. Maguyam, Silang	1,500 m ² industrial lot (TCT No. 54564) with factory bldg. & imp.	P 13,482,400.00
LAGUNA			
AM-PY-042	South Fairway Homes Classic, Landayan, San Pedro	45 m ² residential lot (TCT No. T-599232 with bldg. & imp.	P 277,500.00
AM-MC-043	Bk. 4 Lot 11, Regal Homes, Brgy. Alapan I, Imus	40 m ² residential lot (TCT No. T-1995484) with bldg. & imp.	P 219,000.00
IRIGA CITY			
AM-CP-044	San Francisco	5,154 m ² three (3) adjoining commercial lots (TCT Nos. 2004, 2005 & 2006) with bldg. & imp. and machinery/equipment/furniture/fixtures	P 54,251,000.00
AM-CP-045	San Juan III	7,736 m ² vacant residential lot (TCT No. 2003)	P 4,882,500.00
NEGROS ORIENTAL			
AM-JA-046	Guba, Sta. Catalina	4,196 m ² six (6) unfilled residential lots (TD No. 15-001-3397) with imp.	P 1,339,800.00
RIZAL			
AM-MC-047	Monzon St., Vista Verde Exec. Village, Phase 9, Bo. Sto Domingo, Cainta	200 m ² residential lot (TCT No. 692494) with school bldg. & imp.	P 2,600,200.00
AM-PY-048	Lot 8 Bk. 2 Señora Dela Paz, Brgy. Sta. Cruz	375 m ² residential lot (TCT No. 3888967) with bldg. & imp.	P 1,009,500.00
CHATEL (sale on per item/lot and "as-is, where-is" basis)			
AM-MC-049	National Highway, Matangian II, Lomery, Batangas	One (1) set ice plant machinery and equipment	P 2,624,500.00
AM-JA-050	Brgy. Itog, Infanta, Quezon	One (1) Rock crushing plant equipment	P 200,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

- To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding;
- To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
- To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers: 892-1566 / 893-7172 or 818-9511 local 2218/2252 for code starting with AM; (074) 442-5305, or 892-3836 and 818-9511 local 2227 Code starting with BAG.

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI - March 18 & 19, 2005)

**EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES****MALE/FEMALE**

SALES REP (074)-446-8644

SALES REPS w/Salary &
Commission 915-1390 to 95WE ARE IN NEED OF:
ACCOUNTING CLERK (Female)
MKTG COORDINATOR (Male)
Contact Ms. Johanna at
359-0232
0928-6110269WE ARE IN NEED OF:
ACCOUNTING CLERK (F)
MARKETING COORDINATOR
(Male)
Contact Ms. JOHANNA at
359-0232 / 0928-6110269**Ateneo CORD offers Strategic
Training and Development program**

THE ATENELO Center for Organization Research & Development (Ateneo CORD) is inviting organization to their training program for April - Strategic Training and Development on April 4-5, 11-12, 18-20, 25-27 at the Ateneo CORD Training Room. Program Description: The Strategic Training and Development Program is a certificate course aimed at developing the competencies of HR professionals and managers in designing, facilitating, administering, and evaluating training in their organization. At the end of the program, participants are expected to: 1. develop strategic training and development plan; 2. develop training program design and evaluation plan; 3. display effective presentation and facilitation skills; 4. conduct

process observation analysis. The program consists of: Module I: Trainer as a Strategic Thinker (Day 1); Module II: Training and Development Needs Analysis (Day 2); Module III: Program Design (Day 3 & 4); Module IV: Presentation Skills (Day 5); Module V: Facilitation Skills (Day 6-8); Module VI: Training Administration (Day 9); Module VII: Evaluation (Day 9); Individual Presentations: Day 10. Total program fee: P 28,000 (Corp) and P 20,000 (Noncorp). The Noncorp fee applies to individuals employed in the Government, NGO, Academic or Religious Institutions if you would like to make reservations, kindly download the attached registration form: <http://www.ateneocord.org/application%20form2005.doc>



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District II - B
MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

March 17, 2005

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to 2610 of the TCCP, as amended, in relation to CMO 5-2003 dated March 17, 2003, and CMO 18-2003 dated 25 July 2003, there will be a Public Auction Sale to be conducted by this Port on March 31, 2005, 2:30 P.M. to be held at the 2nd Floor, MICP Building, North Harbor, Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, Manila, the herein described articles in lot. Said articles shall be available for viewing on March 30, 2005. In the event of a failed bidding, the second auction shall be conducted on the third business day following the first bidding.

Lot No. 100-04	V.T. SANTIAGO R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	One (1) Lot Used Replacement Parts & Access. 8 pcs. gear box 15 pcs. radiator 21 pcs. auxiliary fan 11 pcs. wiper motor 8 pcs. seat belt 21 pcs. assorted car headlight 1 unit Honda 3 cyl. gas engine 4 units Nissan gas engine 2 units Subaru gas engine 1 unit Suzuki 2 cyl. gas engine 8 pcs. nose cut for Mitsubishi & Nissan Cars 2 pcs. car hood 20 pcs. assorted car door 2 pcs. front axle 3 pcs. transfer case for car 41 pcs. car seats 15 pcs. assorted mug wheels 2 units motorcycle 125 cc. junk condition Note: Subject to final counting before release. Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. APJU-9005780
Floor Price: P66,250.00		
Lot No. 101-04	VARIOUS CONSIGNEES R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	62 chns. ceramic cups & saucer set, 12 pcs./set 1 setbox, 2 bxs./chn. 1 chn. drinking glasses, 72 pcs./chn. 12 pcs. water jug 8 pcs. lying pan, non-stick 2 chns. Silva Davara cups & saucers set, 12 pcs./set, 1 setbox, 8 bxs./chn. 1 chn. Angeline beverage set, 12 pcs./set, 1 setbox, 10 bxs./chn. 5 bxs. dinner ware set, 1 doz./set 1 chn. stainless steel stock pot, 4 pcs./chn. Note: Old stock glassware. Made in China. Location: DASSAD, North Harbor
Floor Price: P18,620.00		
Lot No. 102-04	ATIKA TRANS. INC. R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	310 pcs. used built-in school children's chairs & table (rusty/dirty) 4 pcs. used mini medical cabinet (rusty) 50 pcs. used children's bicycles 2 pcs. used sofa chairs (single, dirty) 4 pcs. used bed cushion (single, dirty) 1 pc. used cart w/ tray 14 pcs. used single chairs, table (mini) 1 pc. used spring bed w/ out frame stand (rusty) 1 pc. used patient portable chair (junk) 2 pcs. used wheel chair (dirty) 2 pcs. used medical chair (junk) 35 small boxes used expired medicine/assorted mat./parts Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. Nos. CYLU-9027230 & INKU-2824393
Floor Price: P19,030.00		
Lot No. 103-04	PROVINCIAL ROAD TRDG. S.I. No. 02-055 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	67 pcs. bucket seat 1 pc. headlight 3 pcs. compressor 4 pcs. side mirror 4 pcs. radiator 3 pcs. car door 2 pcs. plastic box, big size 1 unit old monitor 2 pcs. muffler 1 unit old scanner 1 pc. jack 10 pcs. starter 1 pc. grill 7 pcs. alternator 2 pcs. hydrovac 2 pcs. car plastic skidings 4 pcs. speaker 1 set old model stereo component 1 unit old model vhs 1 unit tv set, almost junk condition Location: ICTSI CY, COUL-5726565
Floor Price: P24,300.00		
Lot No. 104-04	CNT WORLDWIDE TRANS. R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	6,316 pcs. Clay Roofing Tiles Net Weight: 19,968 kgs. Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. SCZU-7185850
Floor Price: P303,264.00		
Lot No. 105-04	ARCHER GEN. MDSE. S.I. No. 03-094 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	105 units assorted brands sold model scooter, 50 cc. China shipments. Note: No tires most parts missing, damage, and broken due to mishandling. So Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. TRIU-9495916
Floor Price: P241,500.00		
Lot No. 106-04	KOWIL ENTERPRISES A.P. No. 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	1 unit Mitsubishi Delica Van, yellow, LHD Chassis No. PB3752, Mark: TR9187 1 unit Mitsubishi Pick-Up, yellow, LHD Chassis No. 2201361, Mark: TR9203, broken Location: ICTSI CFS-3 Stalag
Floor Price: P200,000.00		
Lot No. 107-04	STONEBRIDGE TRADING A.P. No. 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	1 unit Nissan cowl, 1 unit Nissan diesel engine, 1 unit Toyota gas engine 16v, 1 unit Toyota diesel engine, junk incomplete parts, 1 unit HA diesel engine, 1 unit 2 cyl. Vulcan engine, 3 pcs. rear axle, 4 pcs. car seats, 4 pcs. car doors, 1 pc. car hood, 1 unit old model tv set 110 v, 2 pcs. 1lt spring, 20 pcs. G.I. corrugated, 5 ft., 10 pcs. wooden doors, 150 kgs. approx. assorted metal & plastic materials 5 pcs. square type steel pipe materials, 80 kgs. approx., 2 pcs. scrap bulldozer crawler steel, rusty, 1,500 kgs. approx. Note: Subject to final counting before release. Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. CRXU-4913808
Floor Price: P68,780.00		
Lot No. 113-04	PACIFIC CONCORD CONTR. R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	One (1) Lot of Used Household Goods 3 pcs. bed mattress 7 pcs. plastic chairs 2 pcs. plastic tables 1 pc. old model oven 1 unit old model refrigerator 1 unit old model washing machine 22 pcs. wooden chairs 2 pcs. sofa 1 pc. living room table 1 pc. old model musical organ, incomplete access. 5 pcs. cabinet 2 chns. personal effects 1 pc. dining table Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. CNCU-4521133
Floor Price: P17,450.00		
Lot No. 114-04	PACIFIC CONCORD CONTR. R.A. 7651 1st Advertisement 'As is Where is'	1 unit Audi 100, model 1987, 4 dr., white, m/t, hnd Location: ICTSI CY, Contr. No. CNCU-2547397
Floor Price: P225,000.00		

Basic Guidelines:

- File the duly accomplished Registration Form (name, address, TIN and other relevant circumstances to be indicated).
- Php2,000.00 Registration Fee (Non-Refundable).
- Php20,000.00 Cash Bond (Refundable).
- The highest bidder shall be required to pay 50% of the bid price either in cash and/or Manager's Check immediately and the balance of 50% shall be paid within the next business day.
- After the second failed bidding, a particular lot may be offered to all qualified bidders for negotiated sale, subject to compliance of the requirements under Section IV-J of CMO 5-2003.
- Payment by Cashier's/Manager's Checks to the BOC/MICP shall bear the following:
 - Pay to the order of Land Bank of the Philippines - BOC MICP E.O.
 - For credit of the Bureau of Customs.
 - For the account of:

Bidder

For further details, please contact Mr. Isidro A. Pre, Chief, Auction & Cargo Disposal Division, MICP, Tel. No. 247-09-77.

(Sgd.) Atty. FELIPE A. BARTOLOME, CESO V
District Collector

HERITAGE PARK
Fort Bonifacio



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Direct Line: (632) 845-2440

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY,
MARCH 19, 2005

OBITUARIES

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743-0505 • 743-0508 • Fax No. 712-2782

The Partners, Officers and Associates
of

MULTINATIONAL INVESTMENT BANCORPORATION

express their sincerest condolences to the family of

ORLANDO D. NEPOMUCENO

who passed away on March 15, 2005.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz Memorial Chapels
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio
on Sunday, March 20, 2005 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Chapel A
of La Funeraria Paz.



*We, the MEMBERS and FRIENDS
of the Congregation of the*

**MONTFORT MISSIONARIES
(Company of Mary)**

Recommend to your prayers
the repose of the soul of our
Beloved

Former Delegation Superior

**REV. FATHER ADRIANUS G.M. (ARIE)
VAN DER HULST, SMM**

who passed away in the Grace of Our LORD
on March 15, 2005 in Hazerswoude, The Netherlands

Memorial Masses will be celebrated

On March 19, 2005 3:00 PM
At Montfort Center
121 9th Street, New Manila

and On March 23, 2005 6:30 PM
At Sta. Teresita Parish Church
West Rembo, Makati City

GOD ALONE



*The Flores Family mourns
the passing of
Police Superintendent
Fernando Y. Flores
beloved husband and father*

*A Funeral Mass will be held at 8 a.m. on
March 19, 2005 at the Multi-Faith Chapel
at Camp Crame, Quezon City. Interment shall
follow at Libingan ng mga Bayani,
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig at 12 noon.*

**"I am the resurrection and life.
He who believes in Me will live,
even though he dies;
and whoever believes in Me
will never die."
John 11:25-26**

CLASSIFIEDS



NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region XIV (Serving ARMM), Cotabato City
Tel No. 421-2407, FAX No. 421-2128

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites all interested LABOR CONTRACTORS to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Handling (Procurement/Distribution/Inflow/In-Warehouse Movement, etc.) of 2005 NFA rice and palay at the following areas:

PROVINCE/WAREHOUSE	ESTIMATED VOLUME (in Bags of 50 Kilos) TO BE HANDLED	Approved Budget Cost (Ph.P)
MAGUINDANAO		
LOT 1, SPGC/MPG, Tacurong City	18,000	54,000.00
LOT 2, GID, Sharif Aguak	119,000	357,000.00
LOT 3, C/C, Cotabato City	30,000	90,000.00
LOT 4, R & B, Upl	47,300	142,080.00
LOT 5, Phillrade V. S. Kudarat	180,000	540,000.00
LOT 6, RPA, Parang	164,640	464,040.00
	594,040	1,647,120.00
LANAO DEL SUR		
LOT 7, Marawi City	96,340	289,020.00
LOT 8, Malabang	23,380	70,080.00
	119,700	359,100.00
BASILAN		
LOT 9, GID, Isabela City	282,200	846,600.00
SULU		
LOT 10, GID, Jolo	19,750	56,875.00
TAWI-TAWI		
LOT 11, GID, Bongao	78,000	234,000.00
AGGREGATE TOTAL:	1,048,690	3,143,695.00

The Handling (Procurement/Dispersal/Distribution/In-Warehouse/Integrated Services, etc.) activity calls for the supply of labor force services only. Bids may be by lot of choice, by lots (more than one lot) or the entire lot.

Schedule of Bidding Activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
1. Distribution of Eligibility and Bid documents	March 14 - 21, 2005
2. Pre-Bid Conference	April 6, 2005, 9:00 AM
3. Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements and bid forms	April 18, 2005, 8:30 AM
4. Opening of bids	April 18, 2005, 9:00 AM

All interested parties in the bidding, must be duly registered labor contractor. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid tenders shall be issued upon payment of non-refundable fee of Ph.P 2,000.00 to the RBAC, NFA, Region XIV, Cotabato City on the date and scheduled time stated above.

The venue for the pre-bid conference and bidding proper will be at NFA Conference Room, NFA Office, ORC Compound, Gov. Gutierrez Ave., Cotabato City.

Bidding procedures shall be governed by RA 9184 and its IRR-A, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act as provided in the instruction to bidders.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) OFELIA M. SERO
Asst Regional Manager and Chairman, RBAC

(PDI - March 12 & 19, 2005)



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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites authorized service providers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of the following items for use at NFA from May 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005.

LOT	ITEM	APPROVED BUDGET
1	Frame Relay Service	P2,666,660.00
2	Internet Service	P333,320.00

The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

March 14 to 28, 2005	Issuance of List of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents and Submission of Letter of Intent
March 30, 2005 (10:00 AM)	Pre-bidding Conference, 10th Floor, NFA Boardroom
April 14, 2005 (9:00 - 9:45 AM)	Receipt and Opening of Bids, 10th Floor, NFA Boardroom
(10:00 AM)	Submission of eligibility documents and bid proposals
	Opening of eligibility documents and bid proposals

Eligibility criteria includes among others that the value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract within the last three (3) years, adjusted to current prices, completed within the period and similar to the contract to be bid, must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

Eligibility requirements and bidding documents may be secured from the Office of the BAC Secretariat, 5th Floor Tensico Building, National Food Authority, 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City upon payment of P5,000.00, non refundable fee. The Letter of Intent specifying the type of service to be offered should be submitted to the BAC Secretariat not later than the close of business hours of March 28, 2005. Bids for any or all lots should conform with the Bidder's Letter of Intent. For further inquiries, please call Mr. Jose D. Chuva at Tel. No. 712-6813 (direct line) or Tel. No. 712-3341 up to 49 local 8923.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY REQUIRED FORMALITY IN THE BIDS RECEIVED, PROVIDED THAT SUCH WAIVER DOES NOT REFER TO A MAJOR DEVIATION IN A BID AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

(Sgd.) PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.
Deputy Administrator & BAC Chair

(PDI - March 12 & 19, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The public is hereby advised that as of February 28, 2005, the following sales counselors have incurred unremitted collections and were terminated by LIFETIME PLANS, INC.

Nestor Ryan M. Aguila	Jonard D. Matias
Thelma P. Amistoso	Resurrection D. Matias
Felda B. Bayo Ang	Cristina M. de Ocampo
Dalisay R. Arriola	Amado R. Pacia
Darius Jose R. Demiar	Josefina V. Pe
Trinidad R. Demiar	Eva Marie Connie Ponce de Leon
Leomer Jude R. Demiar	Marlou G. Negro
Pablita Go	Elena R. Quintit
Elena M. Mangotara	Joannaleen Grace A. Reyes
Rafael Joseph V. Maramag	Sonia C. Ripay
Alexis O. Maranan	Linda Q. Rosales
Jayson D. Matias	Margarita T. Ruperto
Jeff D. Matias	Ma. Theresa Q. Seratubias
Jerico D. Matias	

The Company will not honor any transactions and/or dealings entered into by them as of said date. Likewise, appropriate criminal/civil actions against them are presently being prepared.

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former president of
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You may also visit **Western Christian College** website
at www.westernchristian.ca

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BPI Family announces '2005 Major Initiatives'

BPI Family Savings Bank is reaffirming its leadership position in the consumer loan industry.

Under the BFB 2005 Major Initiatives, the bank aims to grow its total loan portfolio by 10 to 15 percent (about P5 to 7.5 billion) specifically to finance car, housing and SMEs (small-and-medium-scale enterprises) loans.

In the year just past, BFB released a total of over P20 billion. Of that amount, P8.8 billion went to finance car acquisition, while P6.7 billion was made out to lot and house buyers. Loan releases to SMEs amounted to P4.8 billion.

For car loans, interest rates are at historic lows. To soften the impact of rising car prices, BFB is now pilot testing a combination of lower down payments and longer amortization periods at the lowest possible interest rates.

Interest rates for housing loans are 10.75 percent for one year, 11.25 percent for two years, and 11.50 percent for three years. To protect borrowers from the vagaries of inflation, the annual

interest rate is fixed at 12 percent for loans with a term of 5 to 12 years.

A fixed annual interest rate of 12 percent also applies to SME loans with a term of five to 12 years. The interest rate is fixed to help SMEs manage their cash flow in a volatile market.

SMEs have always been recipients of low-interest rate loans from the bank.

Under a program called Support for SMEs, BFB is adopting a more participatory approach. It is assigning experts who will serve as mentors to each participating enterprise for the next 3 months following release of loan. The purpose of this innovation is to teach the firm's owners and officers the finer points of financial management and imbue them with the right concept of credit.

After a successful run in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Davao and Cebu, the program was relaunched in Batangas City. After the rest of the Southern Tagalog region is covered, it will be brought to Iloilo in the Visayas, Naga and Dagupan in Luzon,

and Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao.

As defined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), SMEs are business firms with assets ranging from P3 million to P15 million and with a workforce of less than 100 employees.

Construction has a multiplier effect on the economy. For this reason, BFB is increasing its lending activity in this sector.

In pursuit of this program, BFB is training its sight on overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), who account for 8.5 billion remittance every year. OFWs have always been a part of the bank's clientele, but there is more effort this year to tap this huge foreign exchange inflow.

Information about the availability of housing loans is regularly disseminated on TV channels abroad. This is in addition to the ads aired on local broadcast media and shown to movie houses.

The bank works in partnership with 30 accredited residential property developers with over 100 existing and ongoing projects.



PUREGOLD LAUDED BY P&G GLOBAL CBD

Puregold's Ailing Puring Sari-sari Store Program was praised for its positive socio-economic impact to the lives of small entrepreneurs. Shown (from left) are: Sherwin Syhau, store manager; Aida de Guzman, business development manager; Baron

Witherspoon, Asean, Australia and India CBD director; Mariano Martin, Global CBD president; Backy Baquiran, Puregold customer team leader; Pel Tecson, Modern Retail associate director; and Levi Labra, Philippines CBD director.



10TH WORLDBEX OPENS TO A RECORD NUMBER OF EXHIBITORS

The Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition (Worldbex) kicks off its decade-run from March 16 to 20 at the tri-venue of World Trade Center Metro Manila (WTCMM), the adjoining Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) in Pasay City, and the air-conditioned tent at the east parking of WTCMM. Worldbex is an annual trade fair organized by World-

bex Services International (WSI). Cutting the ribbon during the opening rites are (from left): WSI director Tessa Roque; Cong. Eduardo Zialcita; WSI founding chair Joseph Ang; Senate President Franklin Drilon; Trade and Industry Secretary Juan Santos; architect Francisco Mañosa of Mañosa & Partners; WSI co-founder Levy Ang and architect Francisco Flameño.



ASIACO AT BAKERY WORLD 2005

Asiaco Enterprises International Corp., the pioneer in kitchen wire baskets, supported the food industry by showcasing its high quality, innovative products in the Bakery World 2005 held recently at the World Trade Center Philippines. Asiaco was awarded as the Outstanding Kitchen and Closet

Organizers, awarded by the Asia and Pacific Excellence Awards, and the 'Top Manufacturer and Distributor of Kitchen and Closet Organizers' given by the National Consumers Quality and People's Choice Awards. For free technical advice, call tel. nos. 744-1556 or text at 0920-9100936.

Reggae Night

ENJOY Jamaican Reggae music and help a life. Petals of Hope Inc., a cancer support group presents Reggae Night tomorrow, 7 p.m. at Jools Theatre, P. Burgos St., Makati, featuring the music of three bands: Good Leaf, Bad Fish and Lame. For every ticket that you buy, you help a cancer patient's life. For donations and tickets contact Susan Villaroman at 776-3453/0917-8252587, or Cynthia Sanchez at 589-5447/0915-4310945.

Asian Hospital Golf Tourney

THE ASIAN Hospital Golf Club Inc (AHGCI) will hold the 'Dr. Rudy Floro Memorial Cup' Golf Tournament on March 22 at the Alabang Golf and Country Club. The proceeds of the tournament, which is in honor of the late Dr. Floro, former vice president for medical affairs of the Asian Hospital and Medical Center, will help support the various charity projects he left behind. Interested parties can contact Dr. Boy Villareal at 771-9295 or Dr. Ike Mendoza at 771-9314.

Jollibee, Ragnarok promo

GET the newest Ragnarok Amatsu and Kunlun: A Tale of 2 Cities only from Jollibee. Each purchase of a Jollibee Kids Meal comes with a CD Installer and Beginner's Guide Booklet of the latest version of Ragnarok. Every CD installer includes the original game world plus the 2 newest maps, Amatsu and Kunlun. With the beginners guide booklet and an Internet connection, you and your kids could play the hottest game online, Ragnarok. For those who are starting up, a two-day trial and tutorial will be set up in select Jollibee stores from March 7 to 31. Not only that, when you buy a Jollibee Kids Meal, you will have a chance to win Poring Dolls or Jollibee Gamebees which you can bring home to your kids. Just look at the coupon found inside the selected CD installer set to see if you are one of those lucky winners.

LBBC celebrates 29th year

THE LIGHTHOUSE Bible Baptist Church celebrates its 29th Church Anniversary tomorrow. Everyone is invited to join in the celebration services on the same day at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the LBBC Temple, 89 ROTC Hunters St., Tatalon, QC. For inquiries, call 711-2888 or visit www.lbcc.net.ph.

Product FILES

Charcoal roasted coffee

KOHIKAN, a Japanese coffee shop boasts of its one-of-a-kind charcoal roasted coffee.

The coffee beans used in this special concoction has been roasted using the best kind of white charcoal called Binchoutan. Binchoutan wood can only found at the Wakayama Prefecture of Japan. It is a type of wood that yields a long burn. A variety of charcoal roasted coffee is available to suit your discriminating taste. You may choose from 6 different kinds of charcoal roasted coffee namely Sumibi, Kohikan, Blend, Tokyo Blend, Emerald Mountain, Kageboshi and Blend No. 3. Only the finest ingredients to make this premium coffee, have a cup and savor the Kohikan experience. Visit Kohikan at the Promenade Building Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan Metro Manila. For more inquiries call 725-4661/725-5270.

Eat, drink and go for Lone Star Ultra Light

"EAT drink and well, be merry" seemed like a tall order especially for the health conscious. They say, too much of this good thing could be bane to their existence. Just imagine all the fattening food and un-belly friendly drinks to be enjoyed. This is definitely not the way to keep a healthy lifestyle.

In recent years, however, many realized that being healthy is not just about shying away from life's perks like one-time food or drink indulgence but rather adopting to a way of life that enables them to enjoy both. Diet like the widely popular Atkins for one, proved to play a significant role in this one lifestyle. The success of this low-carbohydrate regimen can be attributed to its targeted approach to weight loss. According to its

late author, Dr. Robert Atkins, there is no reason for people not to enjoy the food they love. With a guided nutritional approach to dieting, who needs calorie counting?

The process itself may appear tricky at first. Serious dieters must adhere to a sequential plan that involves the two-week Induction Phase, Ongoing Weight Loss (OWL) routine to Pre- and Lifetime Maintenance. Each phase of the low-carb scheme focuses on smart eating. This entails right food choices such as tuna, beef, pork and chicken, along with eggs, select vegetables, and oil. This also meant avoiding pasta, grains, bread, starchy veggies and dairy products except cheese cream or butter.

The great thing about Atkins is that

works without giving up one's favorite indulgence like beer for example. Beer lovers who are keen to pursue such low-carbohydrate diet should find Lone Star Ultra Light not only to their liking but perfect in keeping tabs at their weight. Boasting of 75 percent less carbohydrates than regular beer, Lone Star Ultra Light has 23 percent less carbohydrates than light beer. It is carefully processed to lessen the amount of carbohydrates but still carries the satisfying taste of one's favorite brew.

What makes Lone Star Ultra Light a toast among the health conscious is that it lets them have fun without having to worry about affecting their physique. So, go ahead diet, drink beer and be merry with Lone Star Ultra Light.



ROTARY CLUB OF LAGUNA TECHNOPARK MEET

The Rotary Club of Laguna Technopark has been organized, headed by Sixto Ronquillo and Gerry Mercado as charter president and charter secretary respectively, with 25 members. A joint project of the Rotary Club of Biñan and Sta. Rosa South, it

was assisted by PP Czar Yatco and special representative CP Rey Anonuevo. It meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m., at the Sta. Rosa Estates II Clubhouse, with dinner catered by Isola Bistro owner Turo Alindada, charter PRO.



PHILIPPINE TAD-SUN KARATEDO HOLDS STUDENT PROMOTION

The Philippine Tad-Sun Karatedo Carmona Chapter held their student promotion last Feb. 27. The event was attended by its founder/president Shiham Entenia Pantila and instructors Ruel Sevilla, Owen Miranda, Hernan Pantila, Modesto Sanoy and Glen Pantila. The promoted members are: Ed-

son Valler Villaluna, Shoty Villaluna, Jonats Levilla, Roberto Cortez, June Earl, Janelle Maquipoten, Alma Trinidad, Ricardo Retrivera, De Paul Valderama, Edgardo Sevilla, Christian Sevilla, Melvin Marasigan, Haja Harvin, Rio San Pascual. Interested parties may call Ruel Sevilla at 0920-9064465.

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	CONTRACT DURATION
1. DRUGS & MEDICINES	Provincial Capitol Building, City of San Fernando, La Union	Purchases of Drugs & Medicines, Medical / Surgical, Laboratory Supplies and Reagents, Laboratory Reagents write-up equipments, Dental, X-Ray and Ortho for LUMC and District Hospitals	P 11,079,169.78	180 CD
2. MEDICAL / SURGICAL		P 5,247,622.50	180 CD	
3. LABORATORY SUPPLIES AND REAGENTS		P 1,877,816.00	180 CD	
4. LABORATORY REAGENTS W/ TIE-UP EQUIPMENTS		P 1,300,000.00	180 CD	
5. DENTAL		P 135,925.00	180 CD	
6. X-RAY		P 696,698.00	180 CD	
7. ORTHO		P 60,000.00	180 CD	

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass-fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 21, 2005
2. Pre-Bid Conference	March 28, 2005, 9:00 A.M.
3. Opening of Bids	a. Drugs & Medicines b. Medical/Surgical c. Laboratory Supplies and Reagents d. Laboratory Reagents w/ tie-up equipments e. Dental f. X-Ray g. Ortho
4. Bid Evaluation	April 11 to April 25, 2005
5. Post-Qualification	April 11 to April 25, 2005
6. Notice of Award	April 11 to April 25, 2005

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN
BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI - March 18 & 20, 2005)

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BUSINESS

VAT issue feared to drag peso down

By Doris C. Dumlaog

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura has warned of a peso freefall, a reversal of the upturn enjoyed since the start of the year, if Congress would not approve the crucial value added tax (VAT) reform package.

However, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisma said he was confident the VAT bill would be passed soon and the government's executive branch was working to speed up the passage of this tax bill.

The local currency, which rallied to the 53-to-\$1 level early this week, shed 22 centavos yesterday to close at 54.34 from Thursday's finish of 54.2:\$1.

Worries over the delay in or the watering down of the VAT reform package also dragged down local stocks yesterday despite the listing of market favorite Manila Water Co., with the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange dropping by 2.37 percent or about 50 points to 2,050.28.

A stock market trader said foreign investors sold down local stocks because they were worried that the VAT package would not get Congress' approval.

"We are continuing to work closely with the senators so we can address their questions

and issues regarding VAT," Purisma said in a statement.

"There is an agreement in the need to consolidate our fiscal position and the crucial role of the VAT bill not only in consolidating our fiscal position but also in strengthening the confidence of the international finance community," he said.

Buenaventura expressed concern that if the VAT package were not passed soon, the market would penalize the peso which has been rising on optimism over this pivotal tax measure.

"If the VAT bill were not passed, the peso would really drop," Buenaventura said.

The sell-down of local stocks yesterday translated to huge demand for dollars as banks covered short positions ahead of a long Lenten break next week.

The peso traded between an intra-day high of 54.10:\$1 and low of 54.36. Yesterday's turnover was \$461.1 million.

A foreign exchange trader said: "No one wants to bet against the dollar at this time. The odds are high for a peso correction just by looking at the fundamentals."

The trader cited the delay in the ongoing deliberations on the VAT bill—the focal point of President Macapagal-Arroyo's tax reform package—due to political bickering.

First Quadrant, JC Martin avoid pyramiding charges

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MULTI-LEVEL marketing firms First Quadrant Philippines Inc. and JC Martin Corp. avoided charges of engaging in pyramiding schemes after they entered into "mediation agreements" to improve their marketing plans, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Trade Assistant Secretary J. Norman R. Hocson said in a press briefing the two firms agreed to refine their business plans as required by the DTI to "ensure ample protection to the consumers."

"There is no conclusive determination that was made on whether or not they were indeed engaged in pyramiding since the case did not go beyond mediation stage," he said.

"Such determination is only possible if there was a failure of mediation and the case is elevated to a formal hearing," he added.

Hocson said FQPI and JC Martin both committed to remove "any references to the encouragement of earning through recruitment" in company materials like catalogs, brochures and sales kits as well as business opportunity meetings that their members conduct.

This means that the companies should not make any promise to members or possible

members that they would be earning through recruitment of new members.

The Consumer Act defines pyramiding as "sales devices whereby a person, on condition that he makes an investment, is granted by the manufacturer (or its representative) the right to recruit for profit one or more additional persons" who are then granted similar rights if they themselves invested money.

DTI officials have explained that the use of the MLM or networking scheme in selling products or services was not illegal in itself.

However, they said MLM or networking becomes pyramiding when it was used in a way that income was generated primarily from recruiting others into the company instead of selling products.

Aside from FQPI and JC Martin, the DTI is also monitoring 36 other MLM companies for possible violations of the law.

If found guilty the companies are liable to administrative penalties under Executive Order No. 913, which includes an order to stop their pyramiding operations; a fine of between P500 and P150,000 plus a maximum of P1,000 for each day of continuing violation; cancellation or suspension of permits from and registration with the DTI; and damages.

Luisita sugar mill shuts down

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PUBLICLY-LISTED Central Azucarera de Tarlac has formally suspended its sugar milling operations to stem further losses following a strike that started last Nov. 6.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), CADT corporate secretary Arcadio Lopez said the company cannot resume operations "because the strikers refuse to return to work and continue to obstruct access to the premises of the Central, preventing non-striking employees to report for work."

Lopez added that CADT was willing to resume operations and give to the returning employees, strikers and non-striking alike their usual work as provided by the order by the Department of Labor.

The mill has not operated since Nov. 6 due to the strike.

"The operations of CADT has been completely paralyzed since the onset of the illegal strike

and has exacerbated the already debilitating financial condition of the company," Lopez said.

CADT legal counsel and Hacienda Luisita vice president for external affairs Vigor Mendoza meanwhile told the INQUIRER that the company has suffered heavy losses of roughly P7 million a day in gross sales since the strike last November.

He estimated CADT lost some P1 billion over the five months that workers were on strike.

CADT operates a sugar mill and a refinery within the sprawling 5,200 hectare Hacienda Luisita property in Tarlac recently racked by labor strikes and ensuing violence.

The sugar mill processes sugarcane into sugar, while the refinery produces alcohol.

CADT employs roughly 900 workers, which include both union members and management.

"There have been no new raw materials coming in. We hope ongoing talks between management and the union will be fruitful. We are very optimistic it will bear fruit," Mendoza said.

LRTA to bid out ad management

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority will open for bidding a five-year contract to manage the advertising spaces along the rail lines.

LRTA administrator Mel Robles said the agency was looking to award the contract to a group that would bring in at least P80 million in ad revenue a year.

Robles said that the railway agency had only been getting about P25 million annually from the sale of advertising spaces within the Line 1 that stretches from Monumento to Baclaran.

The operation of Line 2 running from Santolan in Pasig to Recto in Manila slightly boosted advertising sales.

The 18 stations of Line 1 stretches from Monumento to Baclaran, while the 11 stations of Line 2 runs from Santolan in Pasig to Recto in Manila.

An average of 320,000 passengers ride the Line 1 daily, while about 140,000 use the Line 2.

Robles said more than 10 groups have expressed interest to bid for the LRTA's advertising contract.

"We have set a floor price of P80 million. We could get more than that compared to the P25 million annually that we have been getting," the LRTA chief told reporters.

Robles said revenue from rail operations would increase by almost 70 percent this year to about P2.8 billion, against P1.66 billion in 2004, even without a P10 fare increase.

But even if the LRTA would include projected non-rail revenue of about P145 million this year, the railway agency would still be short of funds to settle about P3.4 billion in maturing debts in 2005, he said.

Robles said this was why the LRTA would like to implement a P10-fare increase in the coming months.

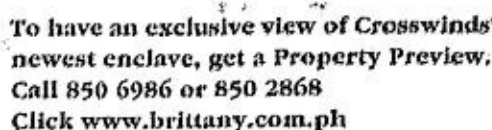
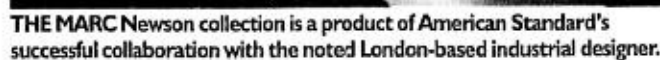


By Charles E. Buban

McRae, who is based in Shanghai, was recently tasked by the company to establish a new

McRae relates that this will not be a big problem considering the brand is already a familiar

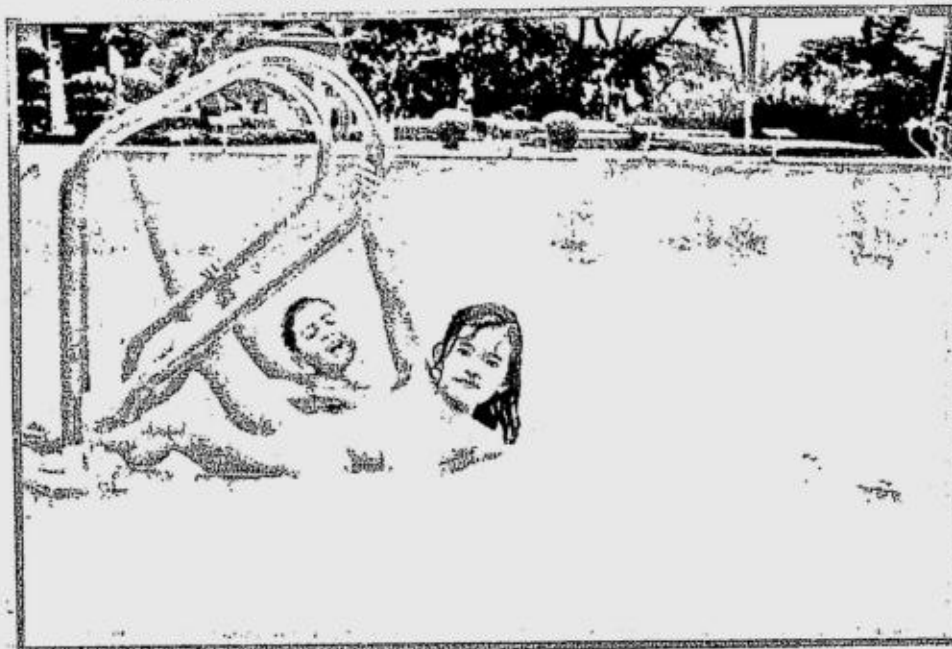
McRae says that when he started visiting the country a few years ago, he was expecting a



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Feng shui in the workplace

FENG SHUI

By Dianne M. Villafuerte

MOST of us, on the average, are likely to spend more or less half of our lives at our places of work, outside our home. Feng shui practitioners say that this is precisely the reason we need to turn our workplaces into spaces which are beneficial to us.

Although the same feng shui principles that are supposed to help us develop healthy and prosperous living environments apply to creating helpful workplaces, feng shui practitioner and writer Zaihong Shen points out that "feng shui for the workplace addresses the unique challenges presented by business." So while creating a powerful and strong wealth chi (energy) is a priority, feng shui for the workplace should not compromise relationship or health energy.

FENG SHUI/B3-4

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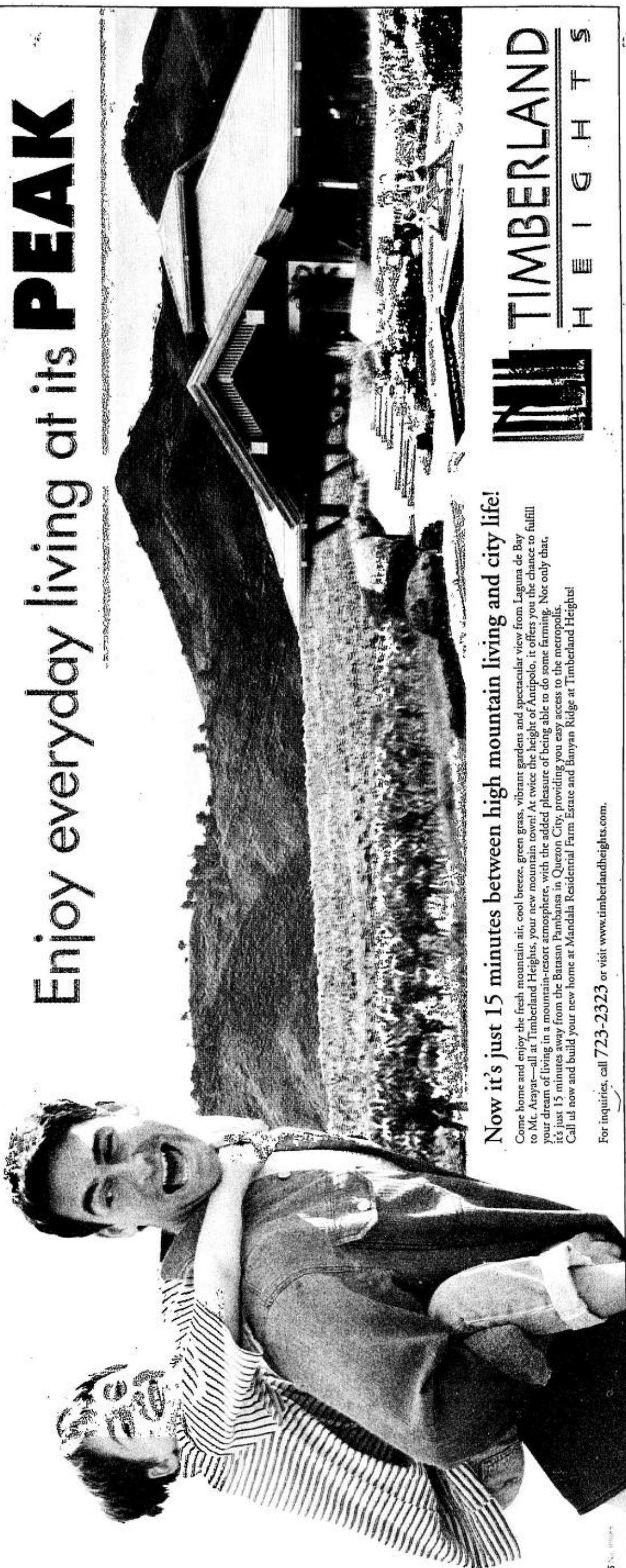
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THE SHORTEST distance to getaway, a coffee shop overlooking Laguna de Bay in La Posada, Sucat.

Finding summerland



KUSINA ni Salud, as seen from the creek side...an artistic haven out of found objects.

ESCAPING the heat this summer can be one futile mission here in the metro. Hot days are here and the glorious sun is lording it over. Though I envy a friend who basks in sunshine, I don't relish it at high noon at all. The last time I did sunbathe in Boracay, I was so sure tan was chic until the mulatto look wore off and turned into a hideous sun-parched skin! So much for my summer frolic!

Alright, I am just sourgraping since I could not afford to leave this sweltering city to get away. Ergo, I decided to do the next best thing. Thus, I set out with friends to drive around one Saturday from Manila to Quezon, in the hope of cooling down and finding a place that refreshes both body and soul.

Jars of clay (and food)

The lure is the pottery. The excuse,

INTO SPACE

Pinky Cruz



food! I would travel miles in search of these two things. When I heard about it, I wasn't sure I wanted to go since Tiaong, Quezon isn't exactly your drive-around-the-block destination. It's a fair two-hour drive (that is, if you know exactly where you're going). Expectedly, it was time for lunch when we arrived ... and it was well worth it.

The compound speaks of provincial comfort that is reminiscent of Spanish-Mexican pueblo walls, the roof of which

was done in clay by the artist himself, Ugu Bigyan.

The atmosphere is as relaxing and unassuming as the potter himself. For aside from the clay stuff, the luncheon he prepared was something straight from your grandmother's kitchen. The papag and the whole assemblage of *kubos* (huts) in nothing but grass and plants simply invite me to lie on my back and dream on. Here is peace for me.

Next stop

It's time for some afternoon delight—coffee and turon—so we headed toward the famed Kusina ni Salud, a good eight kilometers from Ugu. The establishment was very much like an ancestral house.

What makes it interesting is that it captures the nature inside, giving an air

of breeziness. It helps that it is situated beside a creek and has the natural setting of a secret garden in the company of the wilds.

Baywatching

On our way home via expressway, we decided to go see this eye-catching development in Sucat that has a semblance of San Francisco bay. The serene view of Laguna de Bay provides the backdrop of this hilly mixed-use haven.

What fascinates me is the feeling of nostalgia the whole experience evokes, making me forget I am but in Sucat. It's high time residents in the area have a decent gimmick place that bespeaks of space...and more space.

Ah...food, art, nature...all in a day's hot but cool summer road trip.

Island Park in metro south: Wide spaces, tropical splendor

EVERY day, all of us in Metro Manila share the realities—varying only in intensity—of life in our high-density metropolis: congested traffic, long commutes, jostling crowds, safety and security hazards, and some of the world's worst pollution in its different forms.

Increasingly, metro residents who dream of a better living environment, but one with convenient access to Makati, Manila and Ortigas, are looking southward. Why not, indeed? After all, not too many years ago, few people thought Alabang would grow into a highly developed residential, business and commercial hub. With the multilane Las Piñas-Muntinlupa-Laguna-Cavite Link Road or Daangharian now making travel easy between Alabang-Zapote Road in Muntinlupa and Molino-Paliparan Highway in Dasmariñas, the environs of Cavite now offer highly advantageous residential locations.

Access to surrounding leisure areas means only a short drive from Cavite—whether to Tagaytay, with its own constant, temperate weather or Batangas, with its invigorating vistas and beautiful beaches. This area, bound by the Coastal Road along Manila Bay and the South Luzon Expressway via Carmona, is one of wide-open expanses where one can breathe fresh countryside air, complemented by urban amenities like malls along the Molino-Paliparan Highway.

Luxury residential community

With this aspiration in mind, Brittany Corp., the maverick developer of high-end residential communities with their



ISLAND Park residents are discerning people, in search of comfortable homes in a tasteful, island resort ambiance.

distinctive themes, enhances its portfolio of exclusive enclaves with Island Park, a 100-hectare luxury residential community of neighborhoods inspired by island resorts. The thematic influences of Island Park and its neighborhoods are drawn from some of the world's most desired island destinations.

Strategically located on Governor's Drive with another entrance soon to open on nearby Molino-Paliparan Highway, Island Park is all about luxurious living with tropical-themed influences, amid wide-open spaces under sunny skies, cooled by breezes that can bring a touch of chill come late afternoon. Just how expansive are Island Park's spaces? The ratio of open space to development area is a whopping 55:45, hard to find in any other master-planned community

around Metro Manila.

Select market

Brittany envisions a select market for Island Park: residents who are discerning people in search of comfortable homes in a tasteful, island-resort ambiance. This ambiance greets every visitor riding up the wide, winding main drive with its carefully landscaped profusion of tropical plants and flowers, characteristic of the entire community.

Island Park is where growing children are privileged to experience what being outdoors truly means, whether simply running toward the horizon, flying kites without snagging them on power lines, playing pickup softball games with neighbors, or going for long bike rides with friends during the sunset.

Design, execution

In keeping with Brittany's standards of design and execution, Island Park is mas-



AN EXISTING vignette of Island Park, with its thematic influences drawn from some of the world's best island destinations.



A BUILDING of St. Paul College Island Park, conveniently located right inside the community.

ter planned by renowned planner David Jensen who is based in Denver, Colorado. Lush landscaped areas are conceptualized by the SWA Group.

Soon, Island Park will open custom home sites with sizes ranging from 300 to 700 square meters, available from P3 to P7 million. Single-family homes range from P8 to P13 million. Brittany is now accepting property reservations for Island Park. Previews may be arranged by calling Brittany at 850-3089 and 850-2868.

Business feng shui

From page B2-3

Timing

Feng shui masters advise future business owners to pay close attention to timing when deciding on a business location.

Traditional Chinese considers it bad luck to start a business when one is in the middle of a personal situation which affects one's personal energy such as when a family member is suffering from a serious illness, when it closely follows a family member's or friend's death, when one is unstable financially or when one's marriage is rocky and weak.

Yellow Calendar

Chinese traders who open their own businesses also usually consult what they call the Yellow Calendar. Available at many Chinese bookstores and shops, it is a yearly calendar which rates each day according to its auspiciousness and therefore helps the would-be business owner in determining the right month and day to start a business.

The Yellow Calendar also tells the Chinese when it is timely for them to plant crops, make financial decisions, buy a house, travel, etc.

Email fengshui.inquirer@gmail.com.



FENG SHUI for the workplace should boost wealth energy while compromising relationship or health chi.

A fresh start for American Standard in RP

From page B2-1

very difficult market, one that doesn't regard value, is focused on cheap products and therefore not profitable for a company that banks on premium products and innovative designs.

Says McRae: "I was pleasantly surprised to find that Filipino consumer generally knows what they're looking for in terms of design and functional performance. What I saw was there's a real section of the market that is really focused on premium bathroom fixtures and faucets."

Because of this, American Standard Philippines has decided to bring in several of its top-of-the-line products starting with the Marc Newson collection that was launched yesterday.

The new Marc Newson collection is a product of American Standard's successful collaboration

with Newson, a noted London-based industrial designer who applied his background as a sculptor and silversmith to this particular bathroom collection.

Getting rave reviews, Newson's collection was described to have been chiseled from a solid piece of pristine statuary marble with a touch of classic yet minimalist form and complemented with classic polished chrome faucets.

Newson's portfolio includes designing luggage for Samsonite, business-class seating for Quantas Airlines, a concept car for Ford, a bicycle for the Biomega company and hair-care appliances for Vidal Sassoon.

The Australian designer's works have been exhibited in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Design Museum in London and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

"Newson's design is just one example of what we will be bringing in to the Philippines in the coming months," promises McRae.

Market leadership

McRae announces that apart from satisfying the local market, American Standard would also like to gain market leadership.

He reveals that with the brand's worldwide reach and network, the Philippines will be able to enjoy products that have been recognized and awarded for its hot designs and technological innovations.

American Standard's bath and kitchen business, which posted \$2.4 billion in sales last year, maintains a manufacturing and product development facilities throughout North America, Europe, South America and Asia.

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Great rooms, great views at Crosswind's Grand Quartier

PROPERTY development maverick Britanny Corp. now offers Crosswinds Grand Quartier (pronounced as kwōr'ti-er), an exquisite blend of architectural design and natural topography set in cool and scenic Tagaytay.

An idyllic and revitalizing weekend home, a veritable retreat from stressful city living, "Grand Quartier" literally translated means "large section or great quarters." It is a fitting name for this slice of Swiss high life just a couple of easy hours drive away from the maddening metro.

Embracing the Crosswinds hillside, this cluster of low-rise multi-level residences, with a combination of one- and two-bedroom units, offer generous floor areas that range between 74 square meters and 109 sq m. Each unit features balconies from which to enjoy the mountain breeze and the magnificent view that Tagaytay is renowned for.

Classic Swiss chalet style

The Grand Quartier design features hallmarks of classic Swiss chalet style: wood patterns running across walls and porches, overhanging eaves extending beyond the walls, dark asphalt roof shingles and stone cladding for esthetic texture and structural strength. The interiors further evoke this Swiss concept of "great rooms" with the optimal use of space, without clutter or overcrowding.

Picture-perfect and sublime, living in the Grand Quartier will be an experience of glorious expanses and intimate spaces for families to celebrate moments in life. Whether spending quality time together at home, or building familial bonds in the outdoors, the Grand Quartier's enchanting environment makes every minute doubly special.

Recreational areas include Rock Creek for nature walks and Peak Park view decks for easy lounging and taking moments to enjoy the irresistible weather and the pine scented breeze that awash the hillside.

Lectures on how to invest in realty

TO PROVIDE helpful guidelines to the benefits of beginning and prospective real estate investors, dealers, developers and realty professionals, a seminar on "Investing in Real Estate" will be conducted by Urban Institute of Real Estate on April 7, 1:30 to 6 p.m. at the Century Plaza Hotel, Century Plaza Commercial Complex, Juana Osmena St., Cebu City.

The other topics which may be attended separately on the same time and venue are as follows: April 8—Property Development and HLURB Rules and Regulations; April 9—Joint Ventures and Syndications for Real Estate Projects; April 11—Property Management and Real Estate Appraisal; April 12—How to Start and Manage a Successful Real Estate Brokerage Company.

Lecturer is engineer Enrico S. Cruz, a licensed real estate consultant, broker and appraiser and real estate fellow. He is also available for real estate consultations during his stay in Cebu City.

For particulars, interested parties may call Urban Institute at (02)681-0928, or email urbanet@pacific.net.ph.



ARTIST'S rendition of the Swiss-inspired Grand Quartier of Crosswinds in Tagaytay

Previous success

The Grand Quartier builds on the previous success of neighboring Crosswinds Swiss Quadrilles. The perfect mix of location, design and the thousands of pine trees growing all over the estate appealed to families seeking an exclusive weekend getaway. The initial Quadrilles sold out in a record four months.

Property previews can be arranged by calling 850-6986, 850-2868 and 850-3359.

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The greening of inner-city cores

MENTION the phrase "green development" and many will conjure up images of single buildings made from earth-friendly materials, relying on solar energy and natural daylighting. Green development is however much more than single structures and the technologies that they use.

The concept of green development implies that land, like any other resource, will be used efficiently and in a way that supports healthy interaction between people and the environment.

A very good example of how land is used efficiently (or inefficiently) is in the way cities have grown. Many of our inner-city cores or downtown areas have been either abandoned or completely neglected, with the populace preferring the more attractive suburban areas. This is one trait that many of our cities have in common with those in other parts of the world.

Infill development

In the rush of people to get out to the suburbs, they have left a lot of properties either undeveloped or underdeveloped. This leads to the further deterioration of the area where business establishments close, residents relocate and crime escalates. In the process, the buildings are deserted and the area becomes a no-man's land. This pattern, if not adequately prevented in time, can continue to spill over to the other areas of the city, increasing blighted areas and further choking the city.

The way to curb this deterioration of the downtown areas is through the introduction of what is called infill development.

Infill development means increasing the density of already developed areas through the addition of new buildings. It is simply redevelopment within existing developments. Instead of starting with raw land in a relatively pristine area and building a residential subdivision or office park like traditional developers, the infill developer attempts to create new and usually higher density uses for land

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado P. de Jesus Jr.



within existing developments.

Properly done, infill development can strengthen existing neighborhoods while capitalizing on existing infrastructure.

This approach can be more cost-effective than building outside the city, by utilizing existing street drainage, water, roads and other infrastructure.

Infill development is now a recognized trend by many sectors abroad as an effective way to enrich the urban environment in cities with blighted and decaying areas. It aims to preserve older neighborhoods by creating a more diverse housing stock which in turn encourages more people to move back into the city.

This type of development can be carried out by converting empty lots into a mixed-used commercial and residential green building, in which people can work where they live. Residents can cut down on commuting time giving them more time to spend with their families, work with local volunteer groups, or to enrich their lives in other ways.

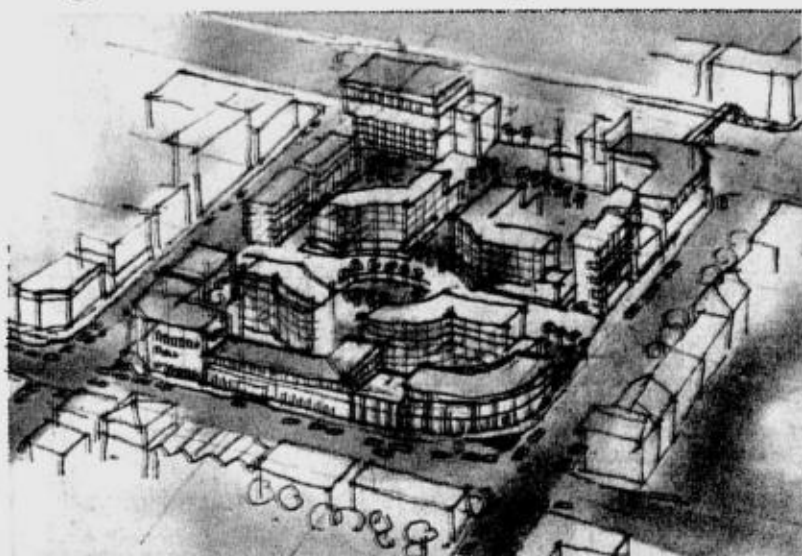
With its reduced vehicle use and less air pollution, the environment and the community benefits greatly. It is therefore important that these sites be very near mass transit, or public transportation or in pedestrian-accessible urban neighborhoods.

Will density reduce quality of life? Many communities resist the higher density that comes with infill, thinking that it will reduce the quality of life. What they do not realize is that higher density is appropriate as long as quality of life is protected. This can be done through careful planning and design so that the neighborhoods are safe, community-based, livable and environmentally responsible.

Design strategies

Some design strategies to make high density more livable are the following:

- Accessible public transport
- Affordable housing in the area
- Mixed-use buildings that add character, interest and diversity



GREEN development implies that land, like any other resource, will be used efficiently and in a way that supports healthy interaction between people and the environment.

- Parks, green spaces, within a 5-minute walk of housing
- Light traffic, trees, landscaping
- Readable street signs (we definitely need this in our cities)
- Lively streets
- Clean and unobstructed sidewalks
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Diverse neighbors
- A range of destinations
- Cooperation with residents to meet their needs

Building retrofit

Another way to enrich the urban environment in cities is by renovating or retrofitting existing buildings. This offers tremendous opportunities to developers, considering that many of our cities have a large number of public and private buildings that are functionally obsolete and need extensive improvement or replacement.

Underused, dilapidated buildings and neighborhoods can be converted into vibrant living and working spaces. As for

old historic buildings, preserving them also means preserving a sense of history which results in less environmental impact than constructing new structures.

It is also an excellent way to demonstrate ecologically responsible and community-sensitive development, often overlooked by many people in our country.

Green design improvements

Green design improvements can greatly help to enrich the neighborhood while minimizing the impact of the development in the area. Some of these improvements are:

- Using porous paving materials for parking areas to let rainfall be absorbed by the ground, thereby recharging the aquifer and at the same time reducing the high cost of the drainage system. (Aquifers are underground reservoirs that yield large quantities of water to springs and wells.)
- Light-colored building facades and roofing to deflect heat
- Landscaping and green roofs to help

reduce heat build-up

To make inner cities alive and dynamic, sometimes a lot of the refurbishing effort is just plain cleanup or to use a technical term, waste management. This may include items like junk vehicles that are scattered in our streets.

Challenge

Bringing people and businesses back downtown is a challenge facing most cities today. Many communities in many countries, like the United States, are successful in their efforts to green the inner-city cores. We too can do it, but it will take a lot of public and private initiatives. Are we ready to take up the challenge?

The United Architects of the Philippines will hold its 31st National Convention on March 31 to April 3 at the World Trade Center, Manila, with the theme "Opportunities Without Borders...exciting times for the Filipino Architect." This year's event will feature prominent local and foreign architects who will speak on Design and Culture—Francisco Manosa, Jorge Yulo, Javier Galvan, George Kunihiro; Heritage and Sustainable Architecture—Syed Zaigham Jaffery, Augusto Villalon, Philip Madec and Marco Imperadori; Practice, Business and Entrepreneurship—Jose Pedro Recio, Paolo Alcazaren, Marcos de Guzman Jr. and Ong Tze Boon; Environment and Landscape Architecture—Efren Aurelio and Ken Yeang.

The event will also feature "UAP Conex 2005," a convention exhibit presenting new opportunities and possibilities from more than 400 companies of new products, technology innovations and services that affect the building industry. Admission to the exhibits is free. For details on registration fees for the seminars, you may call the UAP secretariat at 412-6364 and 412-6374.

(The author is vice chair of the board of judges of the Asean Energy Awards and is a practicing green architect. For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.)

St. Scholastica-Westgrove's first high school class grads

THE FIRST graduating class of Saint Scholastica's College-Westgrove is now prepared and ready to face newer challenges as developed and decisive individuals. Says parent Isa Feliciano: "I'm very proud because it's the pioneering graduating class here. So far, the students have passed entrance examinations given by top universities."

Isa has been heavily involved with addressing various concerns as part of the Parent-Teacher Association, looking out for every student's development, including her daughter Angela. "Not only do they develop their skills and talents at a competitive rate with other schools, they are also encouraged to keep abreast with current events and become conscientious, caring and responsible individuals. From our experience, our children seem to understand their lessons better and learn faster because of the clean, quiet and healthy environment. It's conducive to learning," she says.

Searching for new home

The Feliciano family considered living as far as Cebu in their search for a new home, but eventually decided on nature-rich Ayala Westgrove Heights after Angela and fellow students from Saint Scholastica's College-Manila attended the inauguration of nearby Saint Scholastica's College-Westgrove. Angela was so excited that she told her parents about the new campus next to a beautiful village. The Felicianos came to see what Angela told them about, and after their initial visit, they decided to move there. "My daughter fell in

love with the place. She said it was so green, cool and hilly like paradise, with so much land and space to explore," says Isa.

Health a major concern

Prior to moving to Ayala Westgrove Heights, the Felicianos lived in Metro Manila. "The family's health was a major concern," Isa says. "We lived in a nice subdivision by the bay, but having to travel daily through polluted streets to get to the school and my husband's clinic made us prone to upper respiratory tract infections. It finally reached the point when we decided that our health could no longer be compromised, and moving was the only solution."

Angela, whose health has improved since living at the subdivision, spent her last two high school years at the newly opened campus, located just beside Ayala Westgrove



ISA Feliciano and daughter Angela in front of Saint Scholastica's College-Westgrove



THE DEVELOPMENT'S Central Park Lagoon is among the many favorite spots of Ayala Westgrove Heights residents.

Heights' entrance. This has also profoundly affected Isa. "It's been very convenient. The school is really a magnet. The Benedictine Sisters are warm; they brought me out of the house and out of my cocoon."

Recommended

Living amid the hills and groves of Ayala Westgrove Heights has allowed the family to build a home they always dreamed of, inspired by a Mediterranean missionary house designed by family architect Mario Arturo Lising. The Felicianos enjoy inviting relatives and friends over as often as possible, and have recommended living there to them. "They love the house. They really enjoy coming over. They like the wind and the ambience. And whenever they're here, we sing!"

According to Isa, Ayala Westgrove Heights' surroundings and growing community really make the difference. "My neighbors are warm, helpful and cheerful to be

with. We support and look out for one another. Ayala Westgrove Heights also has more than enough facilities to keep us from going anywhere else. The environment is heavenly! Residents have clubs to join to keep them busy and entertained. And there are plenty of sports activities to choose from!"

Features, amenities

Her husband Antonio also appreciates the subdivision's delightful features and amenities. "He really loves it here. He plays soccer at the field, and enjoys cycling around the hills," she says.

Living at Ayala Westgrove Heights is one of the most important decisions that the Felicianos have made as a family. "You cannot go wrong with Ayala Land."

For more information about this growing community referred to Ayala insiders as "the next big thing," call 848-5000, log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph or e-mail ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph.

Chateau Elysee now developing Phase 2 and clubhouse

A FEW months after the completion of its first phase, Chateau Elysee, the residential project of Synergy Properties Holdings Corp. and SM Development Corp., is already on its second phase of development, officially marked by groundbreaking ceremonies.

Along with the second phase's, the groundbreaking for the clubhouse was also held.

Affordable residence

Families looking for their dream homes now have another reason to lap up the offer posed by the people who are also behind the superbrand that is SM. The development in one of the country's most affordable exclusive residential enclaves now has families looking forward to moving into the community sooner than they expect.

Notable names present at the groundbreaking were Henry Sy Jr., scion of the famed mega-malls magnate and Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe.

Chateau Elysee had earlier promised to equip the condoville clusters with the features and amenities that an exclusive community offers—some of which cannot be found in condominiums. Such an installation should attract

more buyers to the development. Chateau Elysee has been positioned as an affordable residential option what with its units' starting price below a million pesos.

What Chateau Elysee is a luxury that isn't commonly afforded to families who take up residence in communities within the similar price bracket.

High-end amenities

The development tops off the other high-end amenities and features that Chateau Elysee promises to place within the next few months.

Soon to surround Chateau Elysee's clusters are sports facilities such as swimming pools, basketball and badminton courts, jogging paths, gym and sauna and a clubhouse that has a KTV lounge.

It also has high-speed elevators, not common in 6-story developments which are unusually just walkups.

Its parking spaces are wide enough for SUVs to fit in.

Its security system is also well taken care of. Each building has a 24-hour swipe and code security system.

There are also automatic fire alarm and sprinkler systems.

All of these make Chateau Elysee a good investment.

Courtyard Inn ushering in new hotel concept in Subic

COURTYARD Inn has ushered in a new American-inspired hotel concept in Subic, making it a favorite "business and family home" in this popular tourist destination.

This can be gleaned from its wide captive clientele that comprises families on vacation, Manila-based executives on incentive travel, foreign and local entrepreneurs on a business trip to Subic and expatriates from the free port's corporate locators, among many others.

Competitive advantage

"We are very focused on room accommodations and services, making it our competitive advantage," said Courtyard Inn general manager Sal Magugat.

"As such, Courtyard Inn as a 'home away from home' comes without fanfare since the hotel

simply offers value for money in terms of comfort and convenience, safety and security, prime and enviable location, very competitive and reasonable rates, and genuine hospitality and personalized service that make our guests acquire some sense of belongingness," Magugat explained.

1-floor hotel

Courtyard Inn is a one-floor hotel built around a beautifully landscaped garden square with a children's playground and park benches, giving it that homely feeling.

Cheerful members of the service crew are always around to provide assistance to guests and keep everything in order.

There is ample parking space for guests and, quite uniquely, a special sleeping quarters for family drivers.

All room accommodations come



COURTYARD Inn

with free breakfast for two at the Aresi's Restaurant, which forms part of the hotel's front side.

Low room rates

Surprisingly, though, the room

rates are as low as P2,000+ for superior, P2,650+ for deluxe and P3,600+ for executive suite.

Children below seven years old sharing room and bed with their parents are free of charge.

"That's why many of our local and foreign visitors check in at our hotel every time they come to Subic whether for business or plain relaxation," Magugat added, citing how the hotel has maximized its advantage in location and the complementation from other surrounding facilities.

Courtyard Inn is located at the central portion of Waterfront Road, which stretches along the beach and serves as the freeport's tourism and entertainment strip.

Such location virtually puts Courtyard Inn at the heart of all the exciting activities that visitors come to Subic for.

Hub of leisure activities

Surrounding Courtyard Inn are international fine-dining restaurants, parks, church, school, bay walk, water sports

equipment rental outlets, karaoke and video bars, pool and billiards, coffeshops and other establishments that make the place a hub of leisure activities by day or by night.

"Yet, when guests want peace and quiet, all they do is come to the tranquility of our hotel and enjoy its comforting family ambience," Magugat said.

Courtyard Inn (tel. 047-2522366, fax 047-2522367, email courtyard@info.com.ph) is partly owned by Gerry's Grill, Network Jetsports and Aresi Restaurant.

Network Jetsports and Gerry's Grill are located just across the street facing the beach, a brief stroll away from bay walk.

"These establishments add up to the many thrills of coming to Subic and checking in at the Courtyard Inn," Magugat added.



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The world's biggest underground system has been in operation since Oct. 27, 1904 starting with only 28 stations. At present, it has 277 stations located underground, 153 on elevated structures, 29 on embankments and nine "open cut stations" or trench-like depressions below street level serving an estimated 4.3 million commuters per day.

If those figures were not enough to dazzle you, here's more: The New York City subway has 31,180 turnstiles (or those posts in supermarket entrances and in the MRT with the rotating arms which, I noticed, cause confusion in some first-time MRT commuters), 734 token booths, 60 elevators for the use of commuters and 161 escalators.

Dianne M. Villafruerte

De Castro, Fiabci world prexy before RP realty chapter

VICE President Noli de Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), and Malaysian Dato Alan Tong Kok Mau, president-elect of the International Real Estate Federation, known as Fiabci, will be guests of honor of the Philippine chapter of the International Real Estate Federation at the Centennial Hall of Manila Hotel in the evening of March 30.

Delegates from Fiabci chapters in 10 other countries will attend the induction of the Fiabci Philippines chapter officers and charter members and the chapter-sponsored investment forum.

This was announced by Florentino S. Dulalia Jr. and Victorio V. Soliven, president and chair, respectively, of Fiabci Philippines international chapter. Both are former national presidents of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba), a direct principal sponsor of Fiabci since 2002, which formed the Fiabci Philippines chapter the following year.

For a stronger economy

The Fiabci event is expected to pave the way in establishing real estate education and training, information exchange and technology transfer in urban planning and development and investments, aimed at improving existing policies and regulations for a stronger economy.

The Philippines chapter now has a membership of 30 real estate and property companies with established reputation and track record in property development and man-

agement, and three public sector agencies—the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-ibig Fund), the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. under the HUDCC. The chapter membership is open to other Philippine industry players such as practitioners and developers involved in tourism and resort projects and leisure estates and other urban development projects.

Induction rites

De Castro will induct the Fiabci Philippines chapter founding officers led by Dulalia, while Malaysian Mau will swear into office the chapter members. The Vice President will be conferred the honorary chairmanship of Fiabci Philippines.

Fiabci is a 53-year-old worldwide network of real estate players, with a more than 60 member-countries embracing about 100 national real estate associations. Apart from individuals and private corporations, members include academic institutions and public sector agencies.

Other Fiabci Philippines chapter officers are Alejandro G. Cruz-Herrera Jr., executive vice president; Lilia Aaron Paterro, treasurer; and Techie P. Bautista, assistant treasurer. Other vice presidents on the board are Editha L. Manansala, Jerry M. Navarrete, Enrique O. Olonas, Felino A. Palafox Jr., Romero E.S. Quimbo, Carlos Sandico, Robert Marie Sy, Jose Peter Sison and Pedro C. Tario, former Creba president. Lawyer Luis B. Pangilinan Jr. is secretary-general, while Arsenio de Guzman Jr. is assistant secretary-general.

Rockwell's Joya Towers & Lofts leading the pack

JOYA Towers & Lofts, Rockwell Land Corp.'s latest vertical development, has been receiving raves since its inception. During the preselling phase of Joya from January to March 2004, about 20 percent of the available units have been sold.

By the time Joya broke ground in September 2004, plans were underway to expand the development. To date, Joya achieved close to 60 percent sales take-up and has added 30 loft units to the original plan.

Over 5 digits

With a tag price of more than five digits, you would wonder what Joya has to offer and why it is selling like hotcakes.

Rockwell has been touted as an innovator and has led the pack by introducing new concepts to the real estate market that just as easily proves to be a winning formula. The rest of the industry players tend to ride on Rockwell's success.

Loft units

In the case of Joya, the concept of integrating loft units to the master plan proved to be a hit. As soon as the market heard about Joya Towers & Lofts, Rockwell was flooded with calls from people inquiring about the lofts.

A loft is essentially a storage space that has been transformed into a living space. In Asia, it is what is called a shop house with the shop on the

ground floor and living quarters on the second floor. What's unique about the Joya Lofts is that the unit is sold bare, allowing buyers a free hand in designing the interiors.

Joya Lofts have a floor area ranging from 55 to 148 square meters. All the units have floor-to-ceiling glass-paneled walls that provide breathtaking views and allow natural light to illuminate the interiors. The first level may serve as a working space or a dining and living area while the mezzanine serves as the bedroom.

Selling a lifestyle

"Rockwell always has the buyer in mind. We don't just create and build structures and sell them like one would a candy bar. We sell a lifestyle, a way of living. And you can see that signature in all the projects at Rockwell Center," said Val Soliven, AVP for sales and marketing.

She adds, "Joya Towers & Lofts offer more than just a place where urban denizens catch up on sleep. It offers room to breathe, a place to grow, an open space to let your imagination roam free. And because it is located in Rockwell Center, you can sleep soundly at night, knowing that you are in a safe haven."

Joya Towers & Lofts is a combined twin-tower and bi-level loft development on the east side of Rockwell Center. It is scheduled for completion in 2008.

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Fun and exciting workshops for kids at Ayala Westgrove Heights

Summer excitement kicks off at Ayala Westgrove Heights, as a series of fun and worthwhile workshops for children bring out and develop their creativity and imagination further. On the 20th March, kids are invited to attend the first special summer event at the Ayala Westgrove Heights Main Clubhouse, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Chito Maniago, writer and reporter for ABS-CBN News Channel's "Bantay Kalikasan", will be conducting a lively workshop on personality development. Kids can look forward to an exciting exchange of ideas, insights, and handy tips on becoming the best person on the job on this rare occasion.

This is just the first in a series of events dedicated to a fun, fruitful and memorable summer for both kids and kids-at-heart alike. A number of sports, arts and leisure workshops are in the works, so bring the young ones over and enjoy the summer breeze at Ayala Westgrove Heights. It's the coolest destination, whichever the season.

For further information on this event, please call Giso Sulit at 841-5518; or Debbie Bertolada. For more information about the upscale subdivision amidst the hills and groves, please call 848-5000, log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph, or email ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph.

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"When everything important to us is within reach, we know we've made the right decision."

Dr. Benjie Luna and daughter Ysobel
Ayala Westgrove Heights Homeowners

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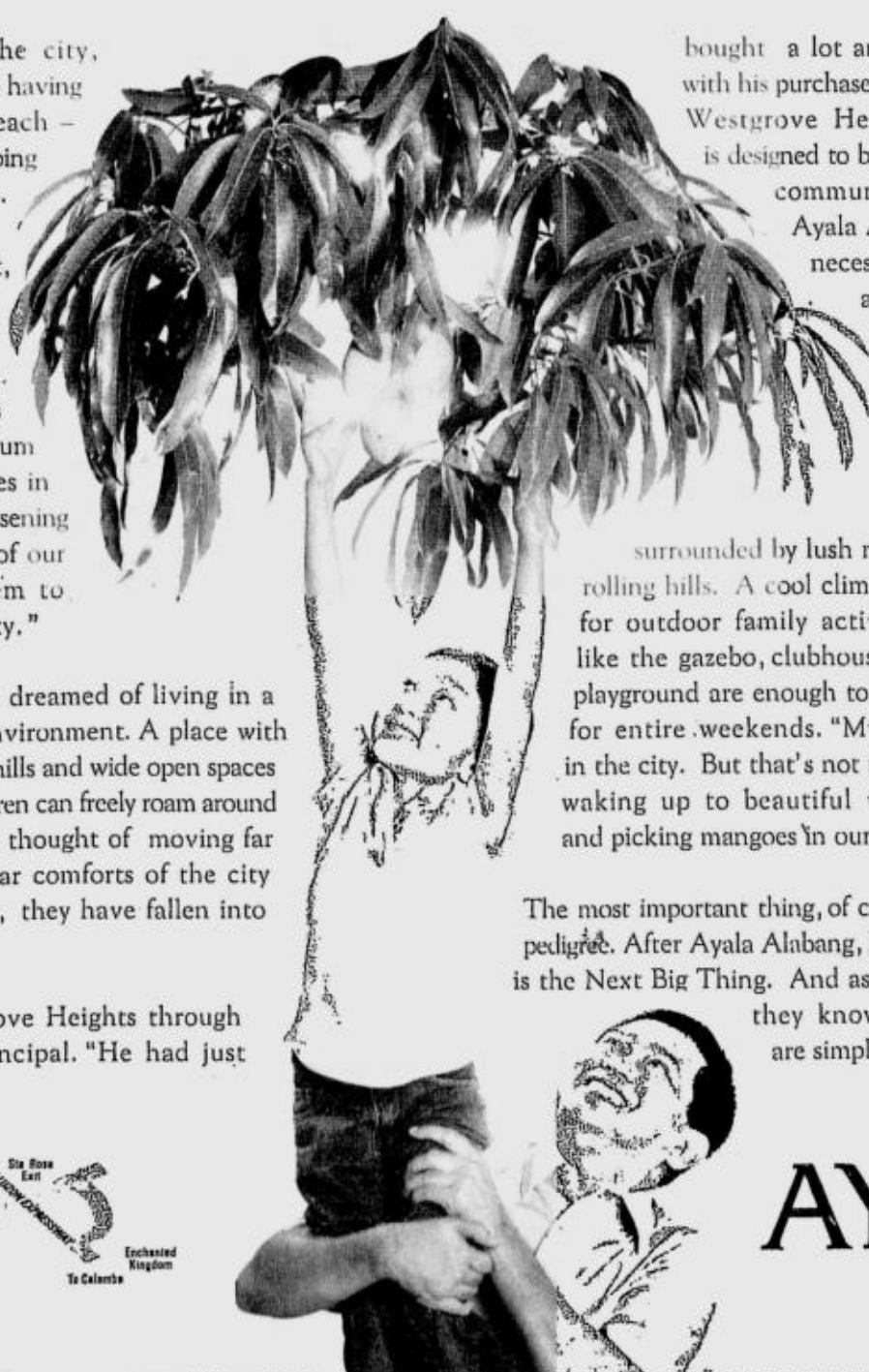
Growing up in the city, you simply get used to having everything within reach — schools, hospitals, shopping centers and public utilities.

Everything is convenient and comfortable for you. That's why Benjie, a cardiologist, and his wife, Ginny, a flight attendant, initially had doubts about leaving their first home. But at the end of 2003, they decided to escape the squeeze that has intensified in their 3-bedroom condominium in Pasig City. More importantly, factories in the area have greatly contributed to the worsening air pollution. "We were really thinking of our daughters," Ginny said. "We want them to grow up in a cleaner, safer community."



They've always dreamed of living in a more natural environment. A place with plenty of trees, hills and wide open spaces where their children can freely roam around to play. But the thought of moving far from the familiar comforts of the city seemed impractical. Like many families, they have fallen into the "big city trap".

Then Benjie discovered Ayala Westgrove Heights through his daughter Ysobel's prep school principal. "He had just



bought a lot and was so happy with his purchase," he said. Ayala Westgrove Heights, after all, is designed to be a self-contained community, similar to Ayala Alabang. All the

necessary amenities are continuously being built around it: schools, hospitals, commercial centers, groceries, churches. Only 15 minutes away from Alabang, it is a sanctuary that does not isolate, but offers a chance to escape at the end of the day.

Inside, they are surrounded by lush mango groves and rolling hills. A cool climate is also perfect for outdoor family activities. Amenities like the gazebo, clubhouse and children's playground are enough to keep them home for entire weekends. "My daughters used to miss our old place in the city. But that's not the case now. They love everything here... waking up to beautiful views, playing with birds and crickets, and picking mangoes in our backyard," Ginny said.

The most important thing, of course, is the fact that it has the Ayala Land pedigree. After Ayala Alabang, Benjie knows that Ayala Westgrove Heights is the Next Big Thing. And as they begin to grow their family roots here, they know that the fruits of a wonderful future are simply within reach.



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Thoughts are choices

By Marge C. Enriquez

LIKE most culinary artists, Margarita Forés thinks with her taste buds. She runs flavors and sensations in her mind before they become a tasty dish. Once she imagined polar opposites: the earthiness of salted egg or itlog na maalat and the delicate and sophisticated truffle oil that worked like fluid light seeping through the egg and papardelle noodles.

Meanwhile, Forés was subconsciously invoking her idol Mario Batali, Food Network's celebrity chef by watching his shows, reading his books and collecting clippings. Eventually, her unspoken thoughts pulled the New York-based chef who, by coincidence, came here to attend a wedding. She met Batali through a common friend, invited him to her Greenbelt restaurant, Pepato, and served him the papardelle with itlog na maalat and truffle oil which inevitably merited effusive declarations from him. True to her signature style of infusing Filipino and Italian elements in her cuisine, she offered him adobo with a twist—using lamb shanks instead.

When Forés was tasked to create the menu for the state dinner honoring Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, again, the comforting sensation of pasta, accentuated by spices and the creamy coconut milk of laing sauce emerged in her thoughts. With the help of her Bicolano staffers, she concocted fresh taglierini with laing of veal loin and chillies. The VIP guest loved the dish because it recalled the distinctive hotness of his native cuisine.

Ask Forés how she pulled it off with such bravado, and she replies in random phrases.

As Cornelius Pols, master practitioner in neurolinguistic programming or NLP, explains: "Expertise has always been elusive. Everything that people do extremely well, they do so unconsciously, which makes it difficult for them to explain to someone."

Forés and other creative chefs have tapped into their mental powers: What they envisioned became not only real, but also successful. In reality, people use their mind powers all the time without realizing it. The difference is that the results take time to turn out and may not always be spectacular.

Nothing comes by chance

Pols says the crux of creativity is making a detailed template in the mind. This is one reason for the growing popularity of NLP, which he describes as a field that "models excellence" aside from dealing with fears. NLP takes its roots in psychotherapy.

Pols studied in the Netherlands and took his master practitioner training in London under the late Richard Bender, developer of NLP. He is based in Lipa City, Batangas, and provides life coaching at The Farm at San Benito, Hippocrates Health Resort.

"Traditional methods can take months or even years before changes are noticed. Or, sometimes they wonder if there are changes at all. It helps to talk things out, though. With NLP you can have measurable changes in a shorter time. Ten sessions is a lot already. The client is guided to look at things they were not aware of before—images in their minds, things they say to themselves, sensations in their bodies, sequences of pictures or feelings. A self-dialogue occurs," says Pols.

"In NLP we teach people how to run their own brains, it seems their brains are running them. We have the most sophisticated computer between our ears, but we've lost the manual. The answers are inside us."

The premise is that every image or feeling you have lived through began as a thought. The governing thoughts are encoded into the mind and become a template in the nervous system. It is a misconception that emotions crop up to us in a random and unrestrained manner; thoughts are a choice.

You are continually creating your situation by the way you think. Like a guided missile in the mind, whatever your thoughts dwell on inevitably leads you towards their target. Nothing occurs without a reason.

Be pessimistic after reading news about rising high prices or wallow in self-pity being part of a dysfunctional family or company, and misery will happen. See opportunity even in an adverse situation, and happiness is yours. Believe it or not, your attitude has shaped your present situation, and now every thought from this moment will determine your destiny. NLP can be a tool to help you to direct your thoughts to get the results you want.

Improve your game

This is a secret of top sports stars who hire mental coaches. They learn to use their thoughts to not only manage their emotional states, but also to win. Pols has helped golfers improve in their golf, dancers attack their difficulties in executing movements, and actors conquer stage fright.

This exercise is classic: Get a role model performing the action you want to improve on. Play that scene in your mind. The more detailed, the better. Then become that role model perfectly executing the movement or delivering the monologue with confidence.

See everything through that role model's eyes and feel the muscular sensations and emotions.

"You have then done a lot neurologically to do that task," says Pols. "In advanced medicine, experiments in biofeedback have shown that every thought in your mind influences every cell in your body. Thoughts have relayed a message through the nervous system to the muscles, and they naturally react."

Pols cites a study of two student basketball teams. Team A played daily for a month. Team B practiced by watching films of basketball and visualized shooting in their minds as if they were doing it themselves. When they competed, Team A won only by a mere point. Pols says, "The best is to combine visualization with practice."

Boost sales

NLP works another way by identifying negative attitudes or blocks that people are not aware of or they unconsciously created.

Pols observes that in working with sales teams, the most common limiting self-belief is their inferiority towards dealing with customers who come from a higher income group. This blocks them from developing a rapport. He recommends that they should understand the needs of their clients and work like facilitators instead. The salespeople's common mistake is to push the product or service.

"A lot of sales here is old bazaar. This is why they can't sell to a sophisticated market. Sales is about serving. Every cell of your being must want to serve the clients and they will pick it up," says Pols.

In money, Pols observes that successful people believe they can access resources to do things that they want, and which are beneficial to society. On the other hand, those with beliefs that money is evil, or that it should be the last of their priorities, tend to be cash-strapped. NLP has helped the latter to reprogram their values about money.

Even health challenges are caused by mental attitudes. When Pols was living in Davao, American psychologist Carl Wuko complained to him about sudden hearing loss in his right ear. He was told by a doctor in the States that there was no cure for it. During a session, Pols walked on his right side and spoke to him. Suddenly Wuko could hear what Pols said. Wuko then went to the audiological center and took a hearing test. Both ears were equal in sensory perception. Pols attributes the temporary hearing loss to a limiting self-belief. However, Wuko intuitively felt that he could get well again.

"Once you detect and get rid of the limiting self-beliefs and adapt empowering ones, doors open up towards the dream," says Pols.

Sometimes limiting self-beliefs will penetrate the mind and keep coming back. These have to be programmed out of the system.

Step back and observe the thoughts, consciously directing the mind inward. Cut off any limiting belief, doubt or negative words, images or sensations. As soon as you become aware of these destructive thoughts, be firm in stopping it or think of something graphic that would cancel that image or sensation. Eventually, these limiting beliefs or negative thoughts will stop bothering you.

The most clear-cut substitute is the exact

opposite of the destructive thought that has been removed. Swap "I can't" with "I shall" and "I'm not" with "I am." Because the conditioned mind will naturally tend to hold on to old, restrictive thinking patterns, suspend disbelief until the new thinking pattern has been founded.

The aim is to be creative and positive without thinking about it.

(Cornelius Pols can be reached through The Farm at San Benito at tel. nos. 6963175, 6963795 or info@thefarm.com.ph)

Margarita redux

Much has been written about Margarita Forés as a culinary whiz kid and woman of style. Teddy Montelibano, a relative, writes an intimate portrait of Forés who recently opened her restaurant at the Gateway Mall. Meluchi Rivera writes her impression on the food.

Of his subject, Montelibano says: "I reminded her that I had been among the very first writers who wanted to interview her long ago, during the early years, when she was just starting to creep into public consciousness. I told her I was glad I had waited this long to sit down with her because I wouldn't have been able to get as much substantial material from our conversation if I hadn't."

Restaurant row

The food business is thriving, gauging from the numerous restaurant or promo pitches from publicists. Contributor Mark J. Macapagal accommodated a PR's request but came to the restaurant unannounced. The brevity of the piece is a verdict in itself.

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between
our ears,
but we've
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Margarita's life trajectories

By Teodoro Y. Montelibano
Contributor

DESPITE the sweltering heat, Margarita Araneta Forés looked cool and elegant in a crisp, white cotton tee tucked simply into faded, almost-distressed pale blue jeans as we spoke one Friday afternoon in her art piece of a restaurant, Pepato.

The dusky beauty's enthusiasm was infectious as we talked about her life's passions—primarily food, particularly Italian.

"No!" she protested emphatically when asked if it was right to call her a chef, "I'm not! Call me a food enthusiast instead." That she is—one with indomitable passion—and also a successful restaurateur and caterer, lover of all things retro; doting mother to 14-year-old Amadito; intimate friend to fellow foodie and business partner, Alvin Lim; and virtual citizen of her two favorite geographical destinations—Italy and New York.

Forés looked on top of her world as we spoke. Cibo, the restaurant she opened eight years ago, and which gave Metro Manilans an authentic taste of quality Italian café fare, continues to be a roaring success with an eighth branch recently opened (in the family-owned Gateway Mall in Cubao, Quezon City. *(See related story on page C3.)*) It has grown so well that she now wants to hire someone to manage the business overall while she studies the possibility of bringing the concept overseas.

The food she serves in state banquets and other Malacañang events continue to wow world dignitaries, and she remains the favorite caterer of President Macapagal-Arroyo, her former economics professor at the Assumption.

The custom-designed, home-delivered South Beach Diet meals business she started in the recent past has grown to a point where she had to put up an entirely new company, Sostanza Health Line, just for that. Since 1997, when she started her first restaurant, she has opened two others—Pepato and Café Bola, the Filipino, rice-based restaurant she operates with Lim.

Forés is pushing 46 (born on March 23, 1959). Despite Lim's being five years her junior, she said, her relationship with him remain as strong as when they met a decade ago. "Alvin's so black-and-white and I'm so grey, and he sorts of puts structure and organization into my life. Can you imagine, when he met me, Amadito (her only child who was fathered by her former live-in partner Danding Yotoko) was only three. Amadito is 14 now, 5'9", and has bigote (moustache). Alvin practically raised him!"

Watching her talk about her life, one would be hard put to imagine the distance she's traveled from being a rebellious "second child"—taking the subway at 16 to a commodities trading firm on Wall Street, where her grandfather J. Amado Araneta (sugar and real-estate tycoon and builder/owner of both the Araneta Center and Araneta Coliseum) placed her as an apprentice; working in the rough fur trade with a Valentino licensee in New York; or living alone while employed in a finance company in Hong Kong, downing Japanese croquettes which she'd bring home after work to consume with tonkatsu sauce.

She's survived—and rather well, apparently—at least two long, intense relationships, one of which has brought her one great love, her son Amadito. Her first venture—Area lifestyle store with a restaurant—ended in an acrimonious falling out with her partner-friends, but it was precisely that disastrous turn that pushed her into realizing her first real big success—Cibo.

Forés could write a book about her life and the trajectories it has taken so far. She spent her high school years in New York where she and the rest of the family joined the clan patriarch, J. Amado Araneta, who sat it out in the Big Apple while Philippine strongman Ferdinand Marcos held the country under martial rule.

Forés described those times as "the raciest."

"New York was at its peak, and it was also the time that it started going through some Italianization with many young Italian yuppies moving into the city to either be in school or start businesses. A lot of these modern Italian restaurants were opening and everything Italian was hip."

Love on her mind

The year was 1975. She was 16, and food and a career in it were the farthest things from her mind. After graduating from high school in 1976, she enrolled in a combined Political Science and Finance course in Mt.



FORÉS belongs to the new generation of working rich who break away from family tradition to set up their own businesses and make their wealth work for them.

Holyoke—a member of the Five-College Consortium, in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Her US schooling was waylaid when she fell in love with young, bright investment banker Monching Tengco (now deceased) who was working at the time with a Japanese bank in Manhattan.

Emotionally bound to Tengco, she flew back home to Manila the summer of her first year in Mt. Holyoke and no longer wanted to go back there to study. She couldn't help it; she was just being true to form. Needless to say, her mother, the naturally über-chic Maria "Baby" Araneta Forés, was "pissed."

"I was a bit rebellious," she intimated, saying that compared to her brothers, sisters and first cousins who lived in the Cubao family compound, she was "always more gregarious," the type who would spend more time with people who were not family. "Even in New York—where I and my first cousins all lived three blocks away from each other—I was the one who got a place of my own early on, and took the subway and the bus more often. I don't know, [maybe] it was a deliberate effort to get out of that sort of very closed-in Cubao upbringing."

In Manila, she resumed her studies at the Assumption, taking up Accounting for her major course and Management for her minor. "My tendency always is, you put me somewhere, I will make the most of it." She overloaded on her subjects, and even became president of the student council.

By the time she graduated (cum laude) from college, her relationship with Tengco was unraveling. "He couldn't make a decision," said Forés, "so I went to Hong Kong to work for a finance company." And straight into another relationship, this time, with Yotoko, 15 years her senior and her son's father.

Hong Kong, the global culinary center that it is, sparked her interest in food, but her gustatory passions were yet to come to full bloom. In 1983, she flew back to New York where she initially worked for a fur licensee of haute couture fashion designer Valentino.

"The coats are glamorous but the fur market is rough," she said. "You have all these Jewish men trading skins on 28th and 29th Streets on 7th Avenue, and that's a rough area." She made friends with a ranking officer in Valentino, a connection that got her out of 7th Avenue and into the rep office of the Valentino fashion house on Madison Avenue, three blocks away from home.

Turning Italian

In New York, she was around Italians a lot and found herself cooking pasta often for likewise NY-based friends whom she would invite to her grandfather's place on Mt. Kisco, in upstate New York. "I remember one summer when Marissa Lopez and I invited friends over for a weekend, the excuse being that we were painting the garden furniture in my lolo's house. It was a mixed group of about 20 people. We

made daiquiris from lunchtime till whatever, and I was cooking pasta every night and... the furniture was never painted."

There might have been a lot of carousing with friends in those carefree days but somehow, Forés got an inkling about what she really wanted to do: "I wanted to work with food and create events."

She had had enough of New York at that point, and with her mom's nod, she went to Italy to take up courses in cooking and the Italian language. Forés found a family outside Florence who rented out a room in their villa. "I signed up for a (cooking) course with this Italian lady for a month outside Florence and the minute I landed there I said to myself, 'This is it.' I loved it! Now I tell people I must've been Italian in my past life!"

In 1987 she was back in Manila and her life took on more focus. Fresh out of Italy in 1987, she prepared food for her younger sister Bledes' 18th birthday party at the Hyatt. The general manager, Perfecto Quicho was so enamored with the things she served, he arranged for her to have a festival of Italian cuisine in the hotel. In her mind, she knew: "They're going to play up the socialite-cook-enslaves-herself-in-the-kitchen angle." No matter, she did it. That was her first professional coming-out.

Her portrait by Jun de Leon was blown up in a major daily, and Manila sat up and took notice.

The food festival was such a success that she was asked to do a re-run, which turned out to be a similar hit.

After that, Forés began catering for small parties, mostly thrown by friends or friends of friends of her mom's, who "forgave" her even if she took forever to finish preparing the food. "That's when I learned [to do business] the hard way," she said. "I realized a lot of discipline was needed to be in the food business and I didn't have that at the time. I was this reckless, young, sort of—in all honesty—rich spoiled kid. I learned that work comes with a lot of responsibility."

Where responsibility was concerned, Forés was bound to face more than just the travails of launching a career in the food business. In 1990, she gave birth to Amadito. Subsequently, she had her first, though disastrous, experience in the restaurant business. She and some childhood friends put up Area, a store which sold mostly imported things for the home and kitchen and which had a café restaurant featuring Forés' culinary creations.

For reasons best forgotten, Forés and her partners had a falling out. The following six months was a pretty tense period, as she had to give jobs to people she

She is a foodie, doting mother, lover of all things retro, and immensely successful restaurateur and caterer

had employed in Area who left along with her. At the same time, she was rushing to put together yet another concept that she'd been working on.

The challenger

She had long been dismayed by the number of restaurants coming into Manila which were "American concepts that'd get in here, take our money away in the form of franchise fees and send dollars out instead of keeping all that [resource] here. I knew we come up with a strong concept that could compete with them. We don't have to hypnotize clients with large but bland portions of food. What I wanted to do was open a place that would serve just the right amount of food that's tasty, so that it's your taste buds that are satisfied, and just only your stomach."

In 1997, she opened the first Cibo at Glorietta in Makati. Her concept for Cibo, (an Italian generic term for food) was that of an Italian-inspired café, very simply put together with a kitchen set up to work with dry, not fresh, pasta. It started a new concept of serving quick meals—salads, soups, paninis, juices, and novel, original pasta sauces that Manila had never

tasted before in a casual mall setting. Her ingredients were imported and lavished on the dishes; the taste was first class. In only four months, Forés paid back her mother the P1 million she borrowed to start up Cibo. After eight years, eight more Cibos have opened in various parts of the metropolis.

Her catering business today is thriving, with her former economics professor, now the president, among her most constant, if demanding, clients. In fact, the raison d'être for her fine dining restaurant, Pepato is to have an appropriate place that would showcase the culinary gems that shine in her vast catering menu. "I wanted to be able to make fresh pasta in a restaurant setting and do all the experimentation that goes on in the catering business. As a caterer, your market is limited to your clients. With a restaurant, you open the door to more people who can come in and try your food. And I guess there's also the financial viability angle since you need something that's permanently running, allowing you to continue making use of your staff."

Pepato, named after her Lolo Pepe, father of her dad, Dr. Raul Forés, opened in 2003. It not only serves as a showcase for Forés' more adventurous forays in the cuisine she loves most; it also shows off her second cousin Jorge Yulo's architectural design talents. She has a strong affinity with, and a fondness for, Yulo, a fellow foodie and the only architect she's contracted for all her restaurants.

Her path and Yulo's were obviously meant to converge. While she was in Mt. Holyoke, Yulo was in Amherst, likewise a member of the Five-College Consortium in Massachusetts, where he got his degree in architecture. Yulo was also in New York at the time that she was. And when she went to Italy, there he was again, studying and living in Rome.

She beamed as she spoke about Yulo's work in Pepato, which was based on her wish for a restaurant that would approximate a 1960s-1970s design look. "I feel that maybe, because our experiences are somewhat parallel, we jell so well in interpreting our ideas through our own separate mediums."

Sans rival

Pepato, where Forés' extensive collection of beautifully art-crafted peppermills are also displayed, has, among its stellar features, a fabulous amber-hued glass chandelier—inspired by the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the landmark Four Seasons restaurant in New York—made by sculptor Bobby Castillo from a design by Yulo.

"The problem with Jorgie and me [is that] we're both so passionate about what we do, that sometimes we go over the top and forget there's a budget to [consider]," she said. Although her partners—the Forés siblings—question her expensive tastes, she manages to convince them that the interior design not only enhances Cibo's image but also attracts business.

It's been a happy pattern so far: Her businesses would quickly register returns of investment, plus profit. Forés is magnanimous in sharing her success. For instance, she has twice flown her chief cook Linda Junio and her assistant for logistics, to Italy, all expenses paid—not to work or study but to eat, go to the markets and explore, to see how Italians live in their natural environment.

The expense is obviously huge, but she said that was among the best decisions she had ever made. "There's only so much I can do to communicate what I mean about how Italian something can be. It's the texture of the cuisine I want them to learn, not the recipes. Once they understand the texture and the philosophy behind the cuisine, they can do their own interpretation."

As a result of those sojourns, Junio, whom she described as a "powerhouse," now cooks like an Italian.

We reap what we sow. Forés must have given so much of herself since, at this juncture, she seems to be collecting her just rewards. "I [am happy] when I see people enjoying my food. Maybe it's a desire to please. I'm almost 46, and up to now Alvin would sometimes ask why I seem to be always trying to please everybody. But I say to myself, there are good things and bad things that come out of that."

As far as we're concerned, Forés' continuing desire to please can only spell good fortune for her clients. From any angle, whatever "bad things" may result from her efforts to see a client's face break into a smile from partaking of a good meal in any of her restaurants can't be too bad a thing, can it?

Going local over leather

Just look what earnest hobbies can turn into

By Harriet Ann Dy
Contributor

AS MANY of Manila's young entrepreneurs did, cousins Cristina and Elizabeth Tuason started their business as a hobby.

But unlike other homegrown bag businesses—most of which are fabric-based—theirs now have leather as main material.

The cousins are the duo behind Tru Bags, a nine-year-old manufacturing company that counts among its past and present clients local retailers like Mosaic, Lily, Singapore Telecoms, Twist, Voyage and Carbon.

Their bags radiate a Birkin sensibility with Target savvy. Both credit the Hermes tote classic as that which made leather accessories chic among Manila shoppers. Again,

Best sellers

Not surprisingly, some of Tru Bags' bestsellers have been totes that take their cue from the Birkin's roomy, boxy shape like the Tanya and Taylor lines. The duo's latest collection also includes office-friendly pieces in embossed and crocodile-textured leather in trendy shades like red, moss green, pink and even yellow.

"For a long time, everyone just wanted bags in black and camel," says Cristina. "But when we launched in September last year, everyone wanted white pieces."

The dramatic shift from black to white can also be a metaphor for their growth. When they started the business in 1996, they sold Laura Ashley overruns, jute and native bags at Christmas bazaars.

Leather slowly found its way into their designs, first as accent, and later as a full-blown line. They invested in the technology, and did their homework on sheep, goat and cow leathers from Italy, Spain, Argentina, and around the Philippines.

"Local tanneries have improved their capabilities," says Cristina.

Today, 85 percent of Tru Bags' output are locally made but with imported details, like thread from Paris.

Right finish

"It took us a long time to get the finishing right because we couldn't find the right thread," reveals Elizabeth.

But while leather remains popular, Cristina says water-resistant nylon bags also fly off the shelves during the rainy season.

The Tate (P4,498), a mix of black nylon and leather, is an option. And while suede, on the other hand, doesn't hold up well when wet, the Tessa (P2,800) works some nice skin into plush.

Tru Bags also recently ventured into the mama market with a line of baby bags for UK-based retailer Notting Hill Designs. The store also carries jewelry by former model Ana Lloren, and cousin Gutsy Tuason's latest tome, "Bahura."

E-mail the author at chinachix@hotmail.com

THE STORE IS LOCATED AT INDEPENDENT LIFESTYLES, POWER PLANT MALL, MAKATI

MAKEUP BY LEE ROBERTO AND ROLLY ADJUCA FOR SHISEIDO



BAGGING success. Elizabeth and Cristina Tuason.

PHOTO BY NICCOLO COSME

Cibo comes full circle

Setting up shop at the Gateway Mall in the family's Araneta Center is much like a homecoming for this restaurateur

By Meluchi A. Rivera
Contributor

IT'S a happy state of affairs when work and home can finally co-exist. For Margarita Forés and her acclaimed Italian restaurant Cibo, setting up shop at the new Gateway Mall in the family's Araneta Center feels "much like coming home." In the late '80s, way before her restaurant ventures, she did her food services at the Araneta family compound, often referred to as Bahay na Puti. It is a stone's throw away from the Center.

As early as three years ago, Forés was already being invited to open her restaurant at the renovated Araneta Coliseum. But she did not think Cibo's clientele—who come as much for the authentic Italian fare as for the resto's sleek, urbane setting—was ready for Cubao, and perhaps more significantly, vice versa. "That was part of the reason that we came up with Café Bola (known for Pinoy comfort food)," she reveals.

That is no longer the case. Thinking along the lines of if-you-build-it-they-will-come, the Araneta Center's planners put up the new Gateway Mall to specifically target the upscale set within Quezon City's environs. They believed the market existed, and that they needed only provide a posh alternative this side of town to lure those who would travel all the way to Pasig or Makati for their shopping/dining fix.

And so my colleagues and I find ourselves meeting Forés for lunch at Cibo's eighth branch, just a short walk away from her "ancestral" home.

Edgy interiors

Amid Gateway Mall's pristine setting of polished white floors, gleaming steel posts and lintels and walls of clear glass, the restaurant is like an oasis of color, outfitted by Jorge Yulo in eye-popping shades of green and orange. Yulo's statement in this newest Cibo outlet gives a wink to '60s psychedelia via the acid

hues and circle patterns on the walls. A playful ceiling installation featuring cylinders and cones of varying heights—think stalagmites with tips lopped off—is both functional and dramatic as it houses light fixtures, while also reflecting light streaming in through the glass windows. The conical shapes recur in other details, such as the backrests for a row of booths, and even in the leg supports for a few choice tables.

Amid these vibrant, dynamic interiors, diners can enjoy Cibo's famed selection of pasta, salads, sandwiches, light entrées and desserts. Forés' menu reflects her philosophy of having each dish hark back to its rustic Italian roots, making dining at Cibo as close to the authentic Italian experience as possible. That her efforts have been considered groundbreaking only shows how muddled the term "Italian" has become in the local food scene.

"We have so much of the American franchises here, and they're good in their own way," muses Forés, whose diminutive size belies her standing in the restaurant scene. "But it isn't like we can't develop our own dining concepts."

New dishes

Among the newest items on the menu are the entrées osso buco and filetto di pesce. "These are my answers to the repeated requests for rice dishes," Forés says. They are, however, no token additions to Cibo's bill of fare. The osso buco wins raves from my colleague, who insist that I have a taste. True enough, the cut of beef shank is tender and flavorful, testament to how it carefully simmered in a bath of white wine, tomatoes and herbs for three hours. The marrow, preserved within the bone, becomes even more prized (and less cloying) with the addition of chopped basil, capers and lemon juice.

While the osso buco impresses with the richness of its flavors, the fillet of *lapu-lapu* in a pesto-cream sauce delights with its light, clean taste. The fish comes

perfectly poached, its sauce a real balance between tart and creamy—a lovely dish.

After seven years and eight branches, Forés is finally adding pizza to the menu. Why did it take her this long? Again, it appears to be market readiness. "We'll be educating the Filipino palate on how the Italians really take their pizza," says Forés. "It's like when we just opened, a lot of our clients wanted more sauce on their pasta. But slowly they realized that it's also about tasting the pasta noodles. As with our pizza, it will be as much about the toppings as it is about the crust."

Authentic pizza

Indeed. In contrast to most pizzas in the city, with crusts that are either of the thin-and-crisp or the thick-and-cake-like variety, Cibo's crust is crisp on the outside—I hear a satisfying 'snap' when starting to break off a piece—with a more supple inner layer which means that I must actually follow through with a firm tug to claim a piece for myself. Taking a bite, I experience the same contrast in textures: the crust starts off crunchy, then slightly chewy, a combination that I find supremely satisfying.

The pizza lineup is still in the development stage, but for this meal we are presented with several of these flat, paddle-shaped, six-by-two inch slabs of tasty, lovingly baked dough. The most spartan is brushed with garlic oil, then sprinkled with rosemary, salt and pepper. Another has slivers of prosciutto ham, slices of tomato, arugula leaves and shaved Parmesan. The third, which I dare predict will be a crowd-pleaser, has a base of tomato sauce topped with capers, olives, basil, cheese, anchovies and a lot of chopped garlic.

In the course of the meal, Forés conducts more r&d by literally playing with her food. She tugs at the crusts, tearing them up, letting them crumble in her hands. She takes bites every few minutes or so, "checking how it holds up."



THE RESTAURANT's look is characterized by stimulating acid colors and cone shapes. Playful ceiling installation by architect Jorge Yulo.

She is pleased with the end results. There's no change in the texture even after [the pizza] gets cold," she says, beaming. Forés and two assistants had learned pizza dough making in Italy; and the extra effort has obviously paid off.

We finish the meal with a winning almond chocolate cake—gritty, moist, dense, fragrant with the flavor of almonds, with a slightly bitter chocolate taste.

Near the end of the meal, Forés surveys her newest restaurant, which has attracted a moderate lunchtime crowd. "It feels so nice to finally open in Cubao," she muses, her voice trailing off. She has come full circle, and Cibo has found its way home.



OSSO buco or tender beef shank is served with rice to accommodate requests of Cibo's customers.

Big on the basics

Luk Foo delivers everything expected of a Cantonese restaurant, plus it's clean and sleek

By Mark J. Macapagal
Contributor

IT'S kind of strange looking at Luk Foo Cantonese Kitchen. It's a well-appointed restaurant. Floor-to-ceiling glass, designer furniture, winding staircase to a cozy second level—it does have the look of a high-end restaurant. However, it's located right beside a huge warehouse-

style bargain supermarket on Commonwealth Avenue. In an area dominated by small eateries and food carts, Luk Foo is a bit of a find.

Now the thing about Cantonese cooking is that, for many people, Chinese or not, including me, it has become comfort food. When I eat it, I look for classic, albeit familiar, flavors.

So, one weekday for lunch, I quietly entered the restaurant with a mind on having satisfying Cantonese food. I had dragged along Bing, an old friend, a rather boisterous, talkative person, to say the least. The waitress was very attentive. I'm not very patient when it comes to ordering and generally I know most of the dishes served at these places so I sat back and watched Bing chat up the server,

asking her long questions—what's good, what's in this dish or that. To the waitress' credit, she dealt with Bing cheerily.

I took over and ordered what the waitress suggested, mostly Cantonese staples: beef with broccoli, steamed *lapu-lapu* in soy sauce, a fairly large mixed dim sum platter and the fried rice of choice nowadays in Chinese restaurants, salted fish and chicken rice. I don't want to get into an individual discussion of each of these dishes. Suffice to say that each one had exactly the sort of taste you would expect in any of the city's top Chinese restaurants. Admittedly, it's not remarkable or innovative, but somehow I don't think that's what most people look for when they sit down to a Chinese meal. We want the ba-

sics, stuff that reminds us of some great meal in the past, and this is what Luk Foo delivers.

The other thing going for Luk Foo is the price range. Compared to most Chinese restaurants I go to, Luk Foo is inexpensive. Dimsum is cheaper by at least P20, and the high-ticket dishes by about P100.

The bottom line is that Luk Foo is affordable. If you're in the area of Commonwealth and craving Chinese, it's an easy recommendation for me to make. Apart from that, you might want to go if you're hosting a big dinner and want to save a few bucks.

Luk Foo is located at Puregold Supermarkets. For the branch on Commonwealth Ave, corner Luzon Ave, in Quezon City, call 9329399.

Fastest flight to Bora

DOMESTIC carrier South East Asian Airlines offers the fastest flight from Manila to Catigan: 25 minutes.

The Dornier 328 plane, a 35-seater twin engine turboprop aircraft, significantly reduces travel time for tourists.

It demonstrates a combination of technology, power and performance. Its maximum cruise speed is 620 kph, and it can climb to a maximum altitude of 31,000 ft, above most weather systems—allowing for smoother flights.

"Take-off and landing performance is exceptional, too," says Iren Dornier, Sear's chair.

The new planes will also service such routes as Clark to Cebu, Manila to Busuanga and Puerto Princesa and, later this year, various other routes.

The first domestic airline to offer the services of a luxury amphibian

aircraft, Sear is also one of the fastest growing air transport companies in the country today. In nine years' time, Sear has grown over tenfold from a once-daily company flying to resorts in Boracay and Palawan.

It is also the first domestic airline company to establish headquarters in the Clark Special Economic Zone. The company was recently awarded the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management Certification for excellently complying with the international quality management standards.

Sear is poised to enter the international market after its appointment as one of the official carriers for the Brunel-Indonesia-Malaysia, Philippines East Asian Growth Area region.

For inquiries, call Sear Makati, 8437308 or 8841521; or Sear Cebu, (032) 3414879 or (032) 2549337.

Boning up

By Dr. Martin Camara
Contributor

MOST people think of the bone as solid and impenetrable. In reality, it is a living tissue, constantly being broken down and replaced. Bones grow through childhood and puberty, with much more tissue being added than lost. They reach peak density and strength in both men and women at about the age of 25. But from 35 onwards in both sexes, more bone is lost than is made.

When that loss of bone density becomes pronounced, a condition called osteoporosis (porous bone) develops. Largely called the "silent killer" by the medical community, it just literally creeps up on us over time.

It is essentially a bone-weakening disease without any symptoms whatsoever, not even pain. It does, however, set you up for a susceptibility to fractures especially of the hip, spine and wrist although any bone can be affected. It is the fractures associated with osteoporosis that can cause discomfort and debilitation.

In the United States, osteoporosis is a major public health issue

with sufferers estimated at about 44 million, or 55 percent of Americans above the age of 50.

Exact figures for the Philippines are not available, although a survey conducted by the Philippine Orthopedic Institute over a nine-year period estimates that 62.9 percent of the patients over 50 were admitted for fractures related to osteoporosis. These figures suggest that it may indeed be a serious problem in the country.

Gender is also an issue. It seems that osteoporosis afflicts more women than men. Hormonal changes associated with menopause appear to be a large contributing factor to rapid bone loss.

The most accurate method to determine bone density is the Bone Mineral Density Test or BMD. It provides information that could be useful in undertaking appropriate lifestyle changes to improve the condition, prevent fractures and enhance quality of life.

The time when bone-forming cells or osteoblasts are active—between the ages of 20 and 35—is the best time to build the best defense against osteoporosis. It can

be likened to saving money in a bank for use when one's earning capacity has diminished. The larger your bone deposit, the more you can withdraw without feeling the pinch.

Contrary to common belief, it is not the elderly, but children and young adults, who need to take the time to lay the foundation for a strong skeletal system.

The skeletal system is a network of living tissue that is constantly being broken down and replaced

A healthy lifestyle is critically important in keeping bones strong.

How-tos

Eat well. Calcium combined with vitamin D is essential to bone health.

Experts recommend about 800 to 1,000 mg a day. Non-fat or low-fat dairy products are a good source of calcium. Other sources include dark-green leafy vegetables such as watercress, broccoli, nuts and tofu.

Don't be a couch potato. Physical activity plays a vital role in bone building for growing children. Doctors at the Indiana University School of Medicine found that those who spent over an hour of average physical activity daily could expect to grow up with from five to 10 percent greater bone mass and stronger hips—an invaluable advantage.

Ironically though, over the years children have become less physically active. Limited space in schools and homes have replaced such activities as biking, swimming, and running with hours spent in front of television sets and personal computers. This may have a tremendous impact on them later in life. Force your kids to use their bodies!

The key to induce calcium uptake is weight-bearing exercise, like running, brisk walking, tennis, badminton, weight lifting and golf. This not only strengthens bones and muscles but also improves balance and coordination.

Proprioception is our sense of position in space. It is sometimes referred to as muscle memory or joint sense. It is the way we know where all our body parts are in relation to space as we walk, run or go about our daily activities. This nerve sense also allows us to know exactly where our body parts are in relationship to one another. That information is carried in the nerves, into the spinal cord and up to the brain. It is a finely coordinated, if largely unconscious, mechanism.

As we age, our sense of position becomes less sharp than before. Loss of balance combined with loss of bone density spells imminent fracture.

One way of improving the sense of balance is through exercise. The elderly may initially need the help of a professional physical therapist. Graduated exercises over time can be introduced to expand their kinesthetic sense using wobble boards or exercise balls.

Chiropractic adjustments on the upper part of the neck also help re-

store an impaired sense of balance. Acupuncture may help with transmission of energy up and down the spine. These techniques "fine tune" the nervous system.

Reduce alcohol and tobacco intake. People who drink excessive amounts of alcohol lay themselves open to bone loss. Tobacco is likewise harmful to bones, so if you smoke, stop.

Reduce excessive use of corticosteroids. Long-term oral corticosteroid treatment—commonly prescribed for asthma and rheumatoid arthritis can slow down the body's bone-producing cells, making bones more likely to break. Inhaled corticosteroids may have similar, but milder, results.

It is best, especially for chronic problems to find a natural and drugless solution. Instead of using steroids for asthma, one might try the Buteyko method of breathing, acupuncture or a nutritional supplement called lyprinol. These may reduce or eliminate the need for bone-weakening medications without any side effects.

For questions, please e-mail drmartin@intercare-centers.com.

4 SM SUPERMALLS ON SALE FOR 3 DAYS!

Four SM Supermalls are offering shoppers big end-to-end savings during their simultaneous 3-day sale event on March 18, 19 and 20.

SALE SHOPPING starts from 10 am to 10 pm at SM City Sta. Mesa, SM Supercenter Sucat, SM City Dasmariñas and SM City Fairview.

The mid-March weekend event at four SM Supermalls gives southsiders (as far as Cavite), northsiders and inner city residents the chance to take advantage of the big big discounts on wide selections mallwide.

For the picking at up to 50% price breaks are great choices on apparel, fashion accessories, shoes, bags, luggage, home furnishings, sports gear, IT gadgets and gizmos, big and small appliances, toys, home improvement tools, personal and healthcare products.

Exciting raffle prizes are at stake for lucky shoppers. Every P500 single or accumulated purchase at SM Department Store, SM Supermarket, Super SM Hypermarket, or any participating mall establishment gives shoppers the chance to win in the draws on March 18, 19 and 20.

SM CITY DASMARIÑAS



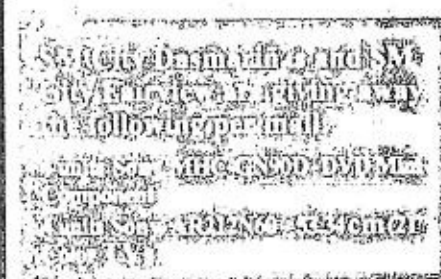
Rush to SM City Dasmariñas for really great buys! The newest shopping mecca in Cavite, SM City Dasmariñas is located along Governor's Drive in Bgy. Sampaloc.

Visit SM City Fairview during the 3-DAY SALE for great discounts and a superb shopping experience.

SM CITY FAIRVIEW



The recently opened Annex at SM City Fairview gives northsiders 100 more reasons (stores) to shop particularly during the 3-day sale event. In addition to the raffle prizes, SM Bowling Center Fairview invites bowlers to "Play All You Can" in a lane at special rates. Bring your kids to SM Storyland Fairview for a wonderful time while you shop.



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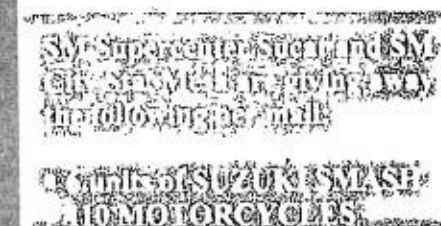


Bring the whole family as you shop for loads of discounts at the SM SUPERCENTER SUCAT! Take advantage of specially marked down prices on fresh meat and veggies, canned goods, fruits and processed delicacies. Never forget the line-up of fashion casuals, personal care products, household and kitchen appliances, and more!

SM CITY STA. MESA



Get ready to dig into piles and piles of fashion and novelties at marked down prices! Check out SM Department Store for great discounts on shoes, sandals, bags, accessories, stationeries, undergarments and much more. SM City Sta. Mesa (SM Centerpoint) is surely a haven for young shoppers.



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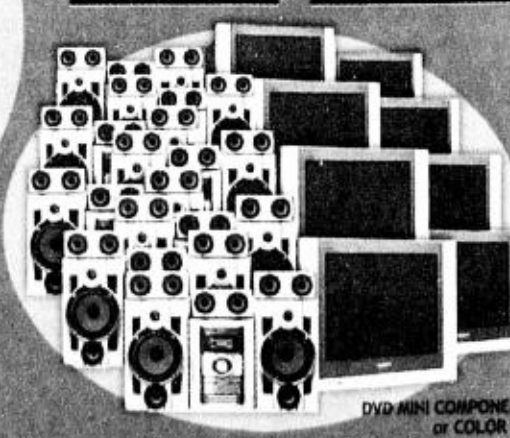
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See mechanics posters for details.

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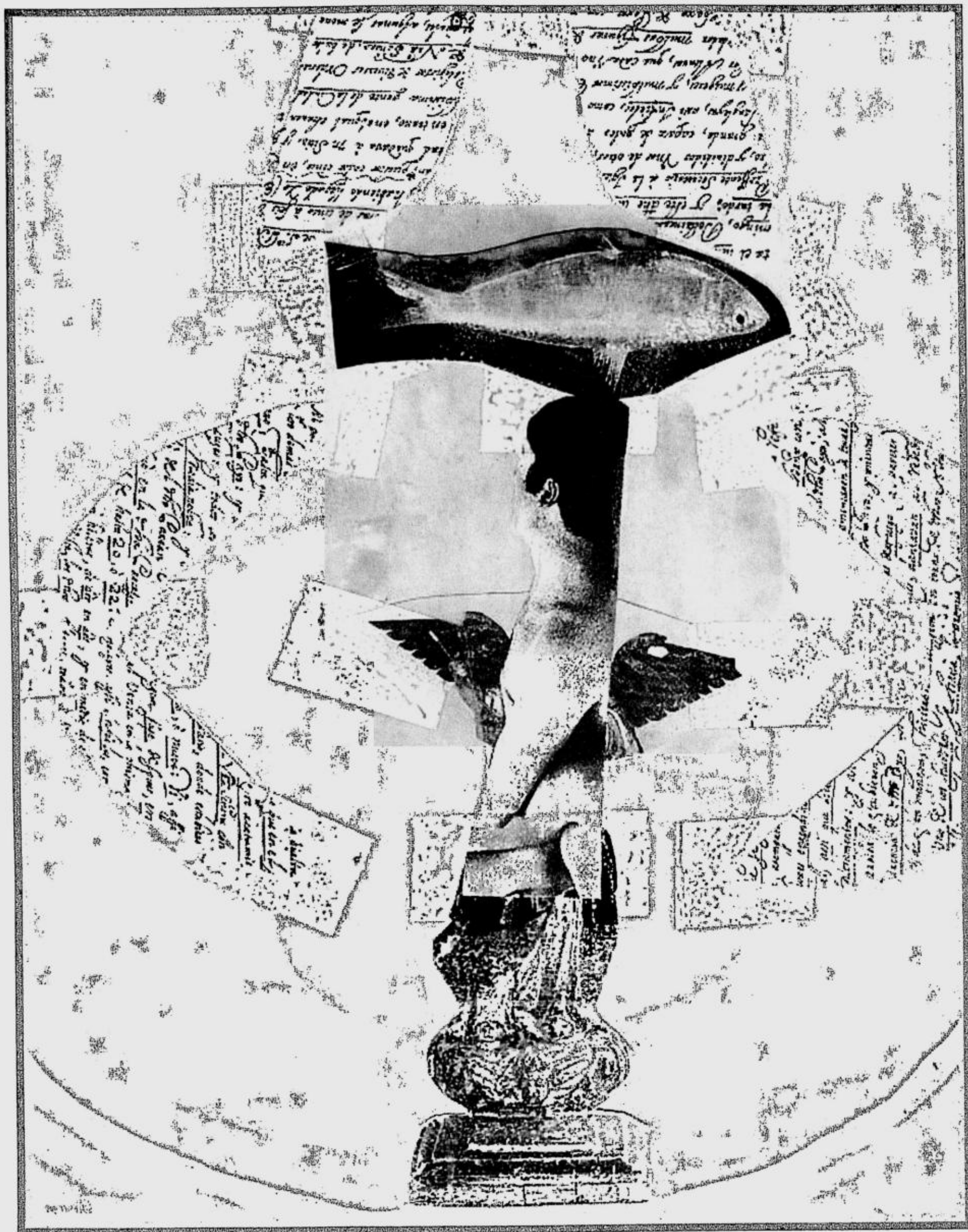
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Pimp your life

This Easter, step out of your usual [party] zone and upgrade yourself one tiny act of penance at a time

By Gino de la Paz
Original artwork by Jason Moss

BEWARE of idle hands, Christians. More than oppressive weather, dried out contacts or the ideoes of March, boredom can make thee do strange things. I found myself in this torture-filled stressfest recently so allow me to expound on it as Jesus did in the Gospels. Well, sort of.

On the one hand, when boredom is bankrolled by Daddy's Amex and copious amounts of vodka, it can lead to several minor accomplishments: a) you waking up in a puddle of vomit (yours), b) you putting things up

your nose, or c) you realizing that you just starred in your very own sex video. Conclusion? Ennui can be evil. Eeeeeeevil.

On the other hand, when a feeling of tediousness is combined with a quasi-religious pep talk and a double shot of espresso, it can turn into motivation. Which can lead to great things. Which can lead to, *ahem*, eternal salvation. Hallelujah.

So in case your New Year's resolutions have gone the way of the Old Testament, fear not. Easter also symbolizes new life, right? Together with Jesus Christ, Mel Gibson and the Easter Bunny, I have come up with some acts of contrition that, although hilariously askew, will definitely save your soul from the clutches of Beelzebub:

Penance #1: Try abstaining from Internet porn. And more important, whacking off to In-

ternet porn. You're busted, Mr. Hairy Palms!

Penance #2: Stop participating in chain e-mails. If you do, your eyelashes will fall out.

Penance #3: Use fake swear words like "shoot," "friggin" or "fudge." Yeah, it's lame but hey, it's Lent and the power of Christ compels you. Make the damn sacrifice for once. Oops.

Penance #4: Give up TV. Stop staring at Jessica Simpson's boobies in "Newlyweds" and read a book. Without pictures. Like, for instance, the Bible.

Penance #5: Quit making Friendsters. Start making real friends. And that goes for Ringo, too. Enough already.

Penance #6: Forget ecstasy. It's a fact that repeated use can mutate the fun receptors in your synapses, leading to chronic depression. A single use, however, will cause you to be nice to the people you hate for a few hours.

This requires some serious praying.

Penance #7: Cut down on your vices. Whether it's alcohol, prescription drugs, gambling, impulse shopping or spreading gossip (or STDs), try living without it for a day, or seven. Pause. Repeat.

It's a fact that Holy Week is sad, especially in a hardcore Catholic country like the Philippines. But think about it: Being nailed to a cross isn't a cocktail party either. (There's a time and place to go nuts, like your senior year in college.) So it goes without saying that Good Friday and Black Saturday at the beach are inappropriate occasions in which to go hog-wild with the rock n' roll lifestyle. (Be conscious of Christian etiquette and wait till the next weekend. Kidding.) When in doubt, however, ask yourself: What would Jesus do? There you go. Amen.



The Made-Up Adventures of Princess VJ Paula

By James Gabrillo, Pepe Diokno, and Princess VJ Paula
STYLING BY BIANCA CONSUMI
PHOTOS BY SARAH BLACK

CHANNEL [V] VJ Paula Malai Ali has had "the loveliest two days" here in the Philippines. The thing is, she hasn't been around—she's been locked in studios and hotel rooms her whole stay in the metro by a weird Russian guy named Rumpelstiltskin. One night, she dozes off in her big poofy dress (see pictures), and dreams of a day all alone—with no one to help her—in Metro Manila. (Cue harp sound)

"Hello?" VJ Paula picks up the phone and presses it against her... ear. She is in the posh offices of Channel [V].

"Holla, VJ Paula!" It is George W. Bush—who yes, has just made a rhyme. ("Wha... is... a raym?")

"George, George, George..."

"Who else are you on the phone with? Who is George?"

"George, what do you want now?"

"You... have to be at a photo shoot in Manila two hours from now." (He formed a whole sentence! Do not forget this is a dream.) "If you do not make it, I will shoot you—Ahaha... haha... haha... ha. Why was I laughing?"

"So how do I get there?"

"Teleportation."

"Okay."

Paula's molecules zoom through the teleportation highway thing, and arrives at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport 21.352 seconds later. She struts out of the old, dirty airport and says, "I should have flown PAL."

She is greeted at the gate by a thirty-something man with a pedicab. "I've seen your feminine wash ads," he says. "Get into the pedicab!" he orders.

They speed off into... Metro Manila traffic.

After an hour on the road, staring at those weird pink fences, the pedicab driver brings her to a suspicious, and dirty part of town called... Rockwell. Just kidding. He brings her to a... motel! (Cue Nginiiiiiiig soundtrack—we don't know how many I's there are in Nginiiiiig, so we just put a lot.)

Paula jumps out of the pedicab and kicks the man in the balls.

"Aha!" he says, and digs into

his crotch. "I have a cup!" He takes it out and shows her.

"This is for Oprah!" she screams, and kicks him again.

He falls to the ground, dead.

VJ Paula, using her intellectual prowess and theatre skills, realizes... she's in a dingy, dirty part of Manila and she doesn't have money at all. She checks her watch—she has an hour to get to the photo shoot. She doesn't even know where it is.

So, in an act of total creativity, she takes out pots and pans from her pocket, and starts drumming her heart out. People start to crowd around her—not because of the noise, but because she looks foreign. ("Aaay! Si Vanessa del Bianco!!!") They shower her with money and gifts. She makes two pesos (minus entertainment tax and VAT)

Just then, George W. Bush wakes up and says, "Ow, gowsh, I didn't tell her where it is!" So he sends one of his minions, Jericho Rosales of the Hunks and Bora "fame" to save her.

"I will save you," says Jericho, and looks down at his script.

"Are you that guy from the soft drink ad—Justin Timberlake?" she asks.

"No. I am Jericho Rosales. My show is big in Malaysia. It's called 'Pangako Sa Yo'."

"Oh yeah, my boss loves you—she's gonna have a baby soon and she's going to name it after one of the characters. Nice to meet you—now take off your clothes." (Remember this is a dream.)

"You're very scary," he replies.

"Okay."

VJ Paula is rushed to her photo shoot in Naia (see pictures—look, Naia's super nice now... they have beds!)

This is where her dream ends. She wakes up, looks at the clock and says, "Oh my Allah (she's Muslim), I have an interview!"

How was your flight?

I had a Pinoy seatmate who was trying to hit on me the whole time—and I had earphones on! He just wanted to talk to me because I'm so cute.

What was the first thing you noticed when you got here?

How cute everyone is... and there are a lot of billboards.

Do you know any Filipino?

I know how to swear in Filipino. It's important to swear.

We heard you grew up with a Filipina helper?

Yeah. She's been with us for 26 years. She taught me how to swear in Tagalog. She also makes good adobo—chicken adobo.

Know any Filipino celebrities?

I went to ABS-CBN to interview... Jericho Rosales. I asked him to take off his clothes, and he was like, "You're so scary." And I am scary. I'm to be feared.

How long have you been with Channel [V]?

About three years.

Who are your favorite musicians?

Prince and Queen. I'm a '70s child, that's why I love '80s music.

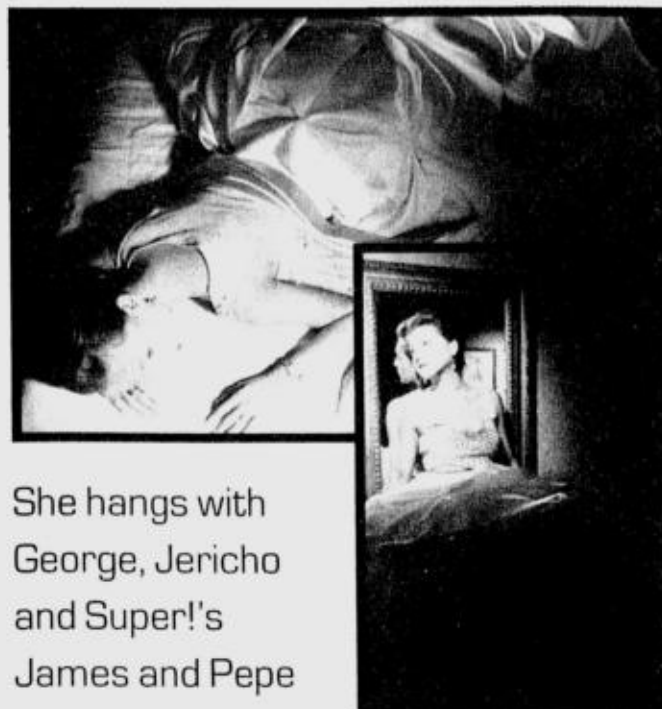
What pisses you off? Mean-spirited people who are not charitable with their feelings.

What does your Super! Saturday night consist of?

A lovely meal with my funniest friends—I'm a "foodie."

What makes you Super!?

That's a lovely question. (Thinks)... (Thinks...) A large ensaymada, with salted egg on top.



She hangs with George, Jericho and Super!'s James and Pepe

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In a New York state of mind



Text and photos by Sarah Meier

THERE'S really nothing quite like cheap thrills—vegetating on a couch, a box of Honey Nut Cheerios by your side, browsing through a copy of US Weekly and believing every word it says. Just for the heck of it. I know I've been in the position where I've wished tabloid writers a not so pretty fate, but let's just give hypocrisy and guilty pleasure a little time to play.

Pictures of Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen—one in rehab, the other trying desperately to balance a Starbucks cup and her school books en route to NYU; the inside scoop on how much Britney dishes out for teeth whitening; the real reason Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey are living 5,000 miles apart; and the news "from reliable sources" that J-Lo is on the verge of her umpteenth divorce.

SARAH/E2



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GLOBE PLATINUM makes beautiful Norah

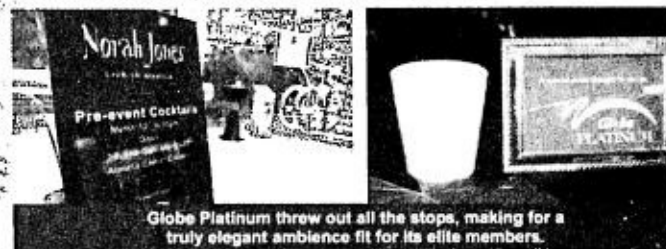
Privileged set serenades

Sophisticated urbanites, music lovers and Manila's affluent circle as pop superstar Norah Jones breezed into the revitalized and sophisticated Asian tour. To celebrate this very exclusive and highly anticipated soiree in honor of the musically gifted artist known for such

Globe Platinum members enjoyed an exclusive 20% discount on swinging pre and post show parties, as well as loads of champagne concoctions and Café Bola's trademark fusion Filipino-Philippine Youth Symphonic Orchestra music camp. Adding special Jones' *Feels Like Home* CDs and ultra-sleek Motorola Razr V3 has

Later that evening, Globe Platinum members joined posh revelers of Jaipur, where luxurious loot bags from Rustan's Essences awaited and signature beats of the evening's guest deejay.

Sign up with Globe Platinum now, the country's first exclusive first-class service. For inquiries, call 730-1000.



Globe Platinum threw out all the stops, making for a truly elegant ambience fit for its elite members.



Statuesque models pose with the sleek new Motorola Razr V3.

Motorola's Mari Litojua and a Motorola Razr V3 model with lucky winner Limary King.

In a New York state

From page E1

This is the essence of my life in New York City: fleece sweats and a hoodie, Laguna Beach on the tube, blissfully distanced from cameras and makeup. But indulging in my downtime makes for a ridiculously mundane read, so let's take a trip around the city that never sleeps (even though it's cold outside, and I personally would like to).

I'll begin by mentioning that I'm living in Queens this trip around, house sitting for my boyfriend's aunt and uncle while they're off mingling with my other country-folk in Geneva. This house, however, is no ordinary house in my eyes. Before his untimely death in 2002, Jam Master Jay of Run DMC legacy, was the owner and resident of this place I'm temporarily calling home, and me being me, I'm taking this as a sign that I'm destined to follow in his Adidas clad footsteps, and pioneer the elevation and strengthening of Hip Hop in my hometown. Inspiration, as you can probably tell, is not dispensed to me in the most conventional ways, but that's another article. So off I go, to brave the blistering cold, and show you what it's like on the streets of the Big Apple.

Fashion

I'm asking Banjo, my boyfriend, if the video camera is going to have issues being outside a tropical country, and he looks at me like I've never watched the Winter Olympics on television before. Seems, however, I had a valid question—because the damn thing started malfunctioning while I was hanging off the edge of the Staten Island Ferry, trying to get a steady shot of the Statue of Liberty. Connection to fashion? There always is one. It was cold outside, and I wanted a pair of Uggs. I wanted them, because

Kate Hudson, Selma Blair, and Gwyneth Paltrow were wearing them (reference, *US Weekly*, November 2004 issue); because all I own are enough sneakers and slippers to shoe Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, and because they were furry, fun, and matched the coat I borrowed from the Yap-ster before I left Manila. So we embark on a trek down Broadway, and I'm popping into stores left, right, and center—partially browsing, partially defrosting—and coming to realize that for the first time in my life, I was being suckered into a fashion fad. (Okay, first, aside from the trucker hat phenomenon, because that one, there was just no getting out of). This thought proceeds to bug the living daylights out of me, so by the time I find the damn boots, and see girls and women of all shapes, sizes, and area codes, flocking around them—I decide I'm going to rebel and head towards the furry non-branded version that nobody's paying any attention to. They bear a striking resemblance to Cindy Kurlito's Pomeranian, Foxy, and are equally loud and borderline annoying (sorry Cinds). Naturally, I end up purchasing them, and let me just tell you—they are the most comfortable things I own. This is in lieu of an explanation, in the event you see me trodding around Greenbelt in them. Anyway, the walking continues, and I'm scouting out the New York City street style, sponging ideas for my clothing line, when I realize how lucky we are to live in the sun-kissed Philippine Islands. Layering is a significant pain in the rear end. Not only do you have to match your shirt, pants, sweater, shoes, belt, coat, scarf, hat, and gloves; but you have to figure out a way to stay warm without bulking and bulging everywhere, and then, when you hit the club, you have to peel all of that crap off, and pay five bucks for coat check. People were whisking by

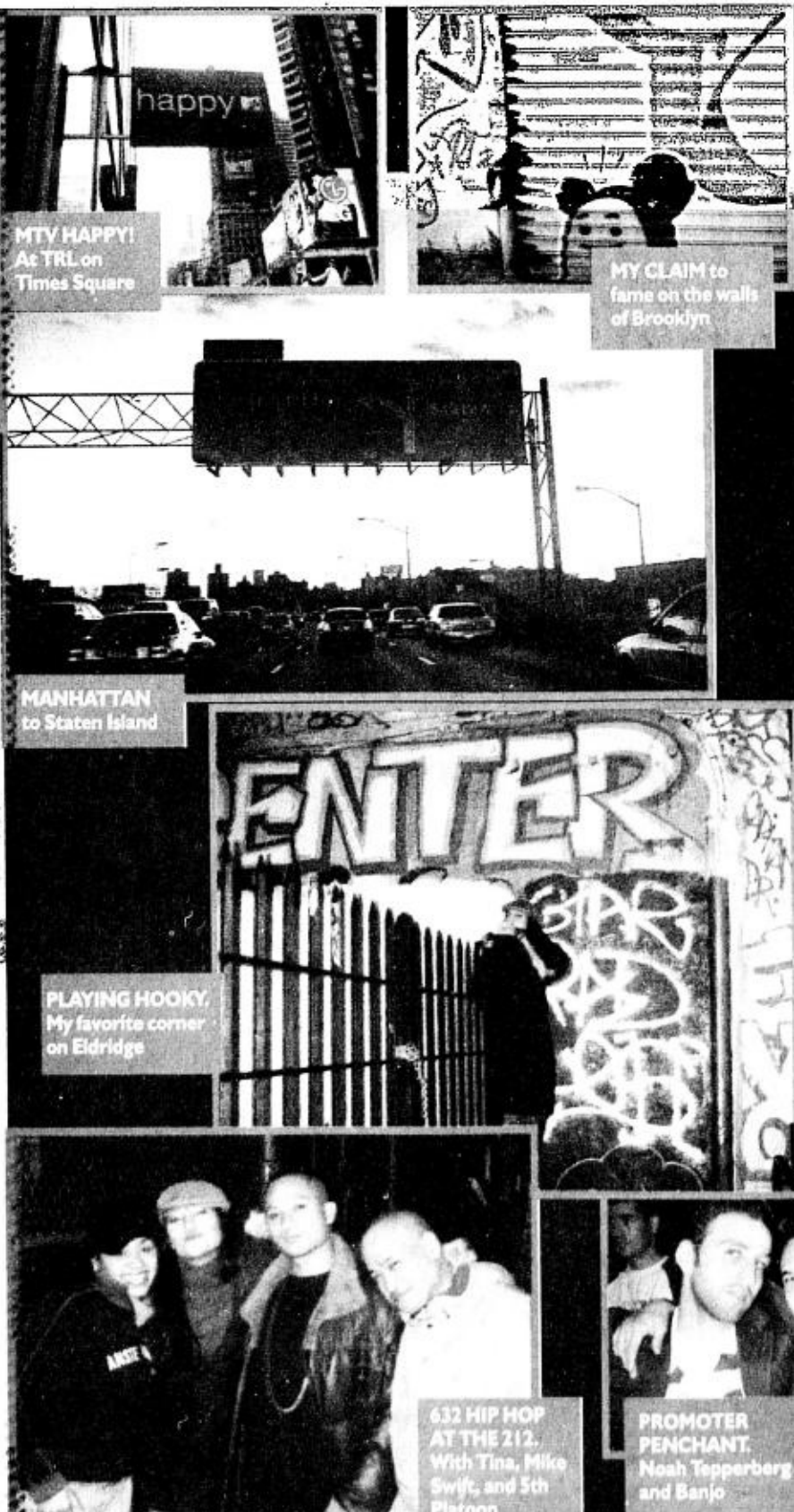
us, wrapped up so extensively

ing were eyes, noses and mouths. Sexy, however, is defined by counter with Vanessa Minnilian Filipina bombshell on N US. I'm in the MTV studio, of Square, and chatting with the promptu segment shoot for supposed to be visiting, but job so much, I decided to v tion... MTV, ahem, ahem), a style, and the genius of jeans into more detail about what estly, she's so darn hot that I ing attention. What I can te that she said she'll be getting when she visits the motherl nice to me. She is Derek though, so unless you're the lized player for the greatest history, I'm not so sure you're

And since I'm gossiping a walking down Broadway with and Brian, when I'm informed cheated on Beyoncé with Fred & Park. If you don't know who What is he, a moron? Anyway to give me more news, over chisms magazine, when I ov ing to Brian "Sarah with a cre dan in the fourth... unstoppable

Basketball

I truly love this game. I do very emotional fan; it's not o for me to be moved to tears mercial. Now extend this ol vorite team of all time—the and you'll know that our



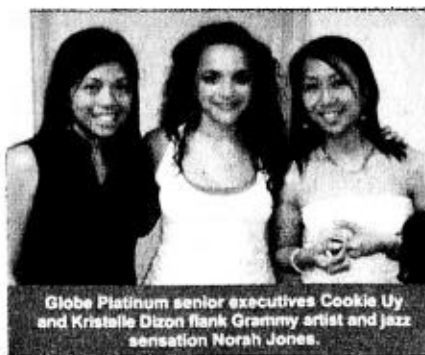
Globe PLATINUM Beautiful music with Norah Jones ded at Concert of the Year

ple got a taste of what is quintessential in the contemporary music scene
vishly made over Araneta Center for the Philippine leg of her first-ever
d occasion, Globe Platinum pulled out all the stops and hosted elegant
a wonderful hits as *Come Away with Me*, *Sunrise*, and *Don't Know Why*.
nt on tickets, and along with the city's stylish denizens, were treated to
s of fabulous freebies reserved only for the platinum set.
cocktails and tête-à-tête, where Globe Platinum members feasted on
pino fare while being serenaded by the musically gifted alumni of the
ce to the relaxed atmosphere was an exciting electronic raffle of Norah
ndsets.

lers at The Fort for a hip and happening afterparty at the opulent Prince
aited VIPs and A-listers. The lavish and exotic Indian buffet, open bar
kept guests partying till the wee hours of the morning.
e mobile brand, and be part of upcoming stylish events while enjoying



Kathleen and Lauren Liechtenstein enjoy some cocktails before the concert.



Globe Platinum senior executives Cookie Uy and Kristelle Dizon flank Grammy artist and jazz sensation Norah Jones.



Party-phile Pepper Teohankes, businessman Patrick Reyno and pal Marcus Sainz enjoy the heady atmosphere.



Model Victor Basa and young artist-photographer Jenna Genio chill out at the Globe Platinum pre-concert party.



Savoring the flavors of India were Mike Planas and Pat-P Daza-Planas.



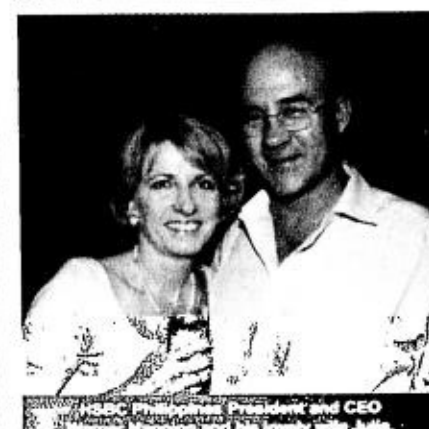
Glowing beauties J.L. Domingo and Jennie Liechtenstein were all smiles after the concert.



Seen at the fancy tête-à-tête were Pilates guru Plinky Recto and fresh-faced TV host Iya Villania.



Giulio Gongartini and Chris Aldaba live it up at the Globe Platinum-hosted post-concert party.



President and CEO of Globe Telecom, Manuel V. Pangalos, and his wife, Julie.



All that jazz: Grammy winner Norah Jones wows the Manila audience.



The Rustan's posse of Gino dela Paz, Amiel Cabanlig, Clara Sevilla and Ferdi Salvador wined and dined all night long.



Jazzing up the after-party were lovely theater ladies Isabelle Gonzales and Pinky Amador.



The Manila Youth Symphonic Orchestra serenade music lovers during the pre-event cocktails.



Richard Cohen and Enkhzul Byambatsuren enjoy the tropical atmosphere of the pre-concert party.



Gillian, Dindo and Roberto Caballero enjoy the perks of their Globe Platinum membership.



Globe Platinum Senior Marketing Manager Kristelle Dizon and Senior Product Manager Cookie Uy present Norah Jones' latest CD to raffle winner Melissa Romualdez.

e of mind

that all I was see-
hs. So not sexy.
by my fashion en-
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baseball team in
-in her league.
ready; we're still
our friends Kathy
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from BET's 106th
o that is, Google it.
y, Kathy continues
qualified for any
erhear Banjo say-
lit card, is like Jo-
le." Haha.

agenda is the home of the white, orange, and
blue ballers—Madison Square Garden. I re-
member making pacts in high school that the
year the Knicks took the ring again, we'd all
meet on top of the Empire State Building. For
awhile there, it looked like we'd have our ten-
year reunion before that happened, but with
the unforeseen injury of Allan Houston, the
even more unanticipated coming out of Jamal
Crawford, and the joy in seeing that his style
was nothing but conducive to Star-
bury's—folks, International School of Mani-
la's Class of '98 might be booking tickets to
JFK sooner than expected.

Now, as deep rooted as my love is for the
Knicks, I've never watched them play live. Un-
til now, that is—and what better spectacle to
watch than their home game versus Clevel-
and; showcasing the almost inhuman LeBron
James. King James wasn't on point that
evening, which was somewhat disappointing,
yet it aided my boys in clinching another vic-
tory. Not on-point, for LeBron though, turned
out to be a rebound shy of a triple double. It's
funny how surreal the NBA is to watch from
up close. The PBA is fantastic—I'm a staunch
supporter, but organized basketball has taken
on a whole new meaning. Besides, when have
you ever seen Jay-Z and Jorge Posada sitting
courtside at Araneta Coliseum?

Nightlife

Now off to the other home of the Knicks in
New York City—not as prominent as the Gar-
den, but equally notorious. It's a joint called
Scores; the highest class gentleman's club in
Manhattan, where drinks'll run ya \$25 a pop.
Depending on the exchange rate, that's
roughly 1,400 pesos for a glass, filled to the

brim with ice cubes, a dollop of alcohol, and
far too much mixer. I am, however, not com-
plaining, as master rapper and hustler ex-
traordinaire, Mike Swift, so graciously
brought us through the special back door, sat
us down at the table next to Rosario Dawson,
and proceeded to kick back and smile while
the manager sent presents our way. Banjo got
a nice Colombian girl, who claimed she had
just arrived in America and couldn't really
speak English, and I got the most awkward
ten minutes of my life. I think she told me her
name, but I was so paralyzed with fear, that I
can't be quite sure.

Seems a lot has changed in the city since I
was last there; my old stomping grounds, save
for Suede and Show (which I refuse to believe
will ever die), were all old news, and a new
series of hotspots had sprouted up in the West
20's. Marquee, Spirit, Crobar, Caine (plus the
new branch of Scores); and naturally, it was
my duty to schmooze, so we did the rounds.
Step #1 to maximizing your New York City
clubbing experience: either avoid being
spoiled (like Banjo) and accustomed to never
waiting in line, paying for entrance or a single
drink. Or, you best be friends with the pro-
moter, and the people at the door. Lucky us,
we're spoiled, and mad connected. The spots
are scorching—be sure to check them out if
that's your cup of tea; Marquee was pumping
till sunrise, complete with girls in teddy's and
lollipops, and our Spirit experience included
Nina Sky, Rupee, Cipa Sounds, and a blazing
Tony Touch, plus chit chats and networking
with Sony reps from Japan, and other 'vital
for the big black book' industry heads.

(Watch out for Sarah's take on hip hop and
her party essentials in the next Super! issue.)



Lowercase Sidekick and Boba Fett.



The Rock and the Bad Company.



Warren G and the Gold.



Double Date and the Gold.



Office of the President of the City.



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Starving Artist Steve Miranda.



Knicks vs. LeBron.



Madison Square Garden.

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SIMPLE PLAN	PERFECT	perfect
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The tissue box office

IT'S THOSE 4 a.m. calls from friends that really matter, to paraphrase Hollywood icon Marlene Dietrich. Or to paint it with further detail, it's those calls splintering the tranquility of eternal slumber that can give one a coronary. For within the twilight space between the dreaming multiverse and the real world, one's imagination simply runs amuck with postulations on who, why or what disturbs the ungodly hour.

I received such a heart-arresting call recently from an old friend, who was in a state of terminal hysterics. It turned out to be an affair of the heart and liver—due to unsupervised Cervo-licking, shooting and sucking, my intoxicated friend had confessed his two-year-old, bottled up feelings to someone who did not feel the same way.

Reel remedies

It's moments like these, when I have to prescribe some good ol' Rx for bleeding hearts, that I inadvertently reach for some home remedies in the Hollywood medicine cabinet.

In love with your best friend who's in love with someone else? That's okay, so was Julia Roberts in "My Best Friend's Wedding," and miming her rubber-lipped advice in the movie, "she will never be gelo!"

Caught your partner cheating on you? Perfectly all right, remember Gwyneth in "Sliding Doors," when she caught her paramour canoodling with another girl. That discovery changed her life (and more importantly, her hairstyle) for the better!

«Going insane because you can't shake off the happy memories with your ex? Well, hello, you're in the same rut as Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet in "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind." In love with a ho? Well, so was Richard Gere in "Pretty Woman!" (You can imagine that at some point I've realized I had seen way too many Julia Roberts movies in my young life).

This time was a bit different, though, for my 4 a.m. caller was a gay friend, and he had just declared his undying love to a straight guy who didn't share the same feelings, because well, he wasn't gay. As such, the only thing I could reach from my tissue box-office at that time was "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," and for those who haven't seen the flick, it's basically about a German gay protagonist who undergoes a botched sex-change operation to lure the straight guy he loves. Thus, short of telling my friend to sever his manhood in the name of la-la-love, I had no sagely advice to dispense from my mental pop culture stock, except for the counsel, "Tequila. Baaaad tequila."

Media transference

Apparently, I'm not the only one around who has the habit of alluding to film scripts and cinematic anthologies in the attempt to explain the mysteries and complexities of human emotion. I can't count how many of my male friends go back to "Spiderman" when comforting themselves with their inability to tell a girl about their true feelings. One even went as



"HEDWIG and the Angry Inch." In which a German gay dude cuts off his schublig to get his man

far to say that "see, even super-heroes get torpel!"

This is the "media transference" that pop culture writer and Gen X baby Chuck Klosterman blames when he once wrote that "he will never satisfy any woman," because all the women he dates seem to be in love with Jon Cusack. (And while I'm at it, what's so freakin' great about Jon Cusack?)

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz



Art imitates life after all, so goes the cliché, so you're bound to find your love life (or your friends' love lives for that matter) not only mirroring movie scenes, but understood a bit more in-depth when viewed from afar.

When you find yourself watching the movie of your own life, you have the luxury of being both emotionally attached and mentally detached. You are able to relate to the protagonist's conflicting range of sentiments, and yet by viewing it through the wide-eye lens of a third person, you can deconstruct the deeper troubles and tirades as you see the bigger context. It's pretty much similar to advice-giving: it's easier to think with your head when you're not the one drowning in emotional quicksand.

Love-olution

Because of the inextricable nature of the medium and real life itself, certain films today have for me become signifiers of the changing genre of romance in the modern world. The storylines may be similar, of boy meets girl (or boy meets um... another boy in some cases) and the process of self-destruction

THE TISSUE/F2



ANGST is sooo '90s. Take it from the "Reality Bites" posse.

Attention, bleeding hearts! There's relief to be found at the DVD shelf

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The tissue box office

From page F1

thus ensues. Yet new questions have surfaced with the changing neoteric landscapes and timescapes.

In the faraway past (like, the '80s and '90s), we pondered the possibilities of love transcending social boundaries (and fashion crimes), as in "Pretty in Pink" and "St. Elmo's Fire" (if you've never seen or heard of these movies, then dating you would be my one-way ticket to Bilibid Prison). We once ruminated on the prospects of platonic/pseudo-intellectual best friendships blossoming into real romance, such as the case in "Reality Bites."

Before the dawning of the Internet, starry-eyed romantics hankering for their soulmates somewhere out there saw themselves in the bodies of Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks in "Sleepless in Seattle." The same pair by the way realized a few years later how e-mail could have saved themselves a lot of trouble in "You've Got Mail". (I thought both movies sucked by the way, because of, well, Meg Ryan.)

Today, with communication channels being streamlined, and cultural bridges being crisscrossed in a shrinking global village, I've noticed a few changes in themes of some of my regular 4 a.m. callers. A few have pondered, can love transcend the fleeting moment and place? Can you, just like that U2 song goes, actually be "stuck in a moment and now you can't get out of it?" To which I once again load my DVD player to get answers from two films, "Lost in Translation" and "Before Sunset."

A tale of two movies

The tales are similar, in that both films take a look at how two people



LIKE, love on the run



on separate trajectories of existence intersect each other at a brief, transient moment in time.

"Lost in Translation" shows two Americans (played by Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson) crossing paths in the dizzying, neon-lit labyrinths of Tokyo. In "Before Sunset," the sequel to "Before Sunrise," Jesse and Celine (played by Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy) meet each other once again in Paris after 9 years since their first fateful encounter in Austria.

In both movies, the characters know that their time together is short-lived. The sexual tension is

there, yet the protagonists hold back and instead live out the intensity of the instant through profound conversations while immersed in an unfamiliar place.

The goodbyes are inevitable; each must soon go back to their separate lives. The poignancy is in realizing that though the moment has ended, there is no real "finality" in the affair because the partings happen when things seem to have only just begun. To echo Celine in "Before Sunset," "when you're young you just believe you'd meet many people you'll connect with, but later in life you realize it only happens a few times."

It's those very words that I've been going back to, to advise my new breed of 4 a.m. callers wrought with the anxiety of finite time. It's what I'm mindful of as well when I'm my very own patient, especially in these times when my peers or the people I meet are still exploring the interlacing avenues of the quarter-life district.

To know that you can never replace the ones you meet at those intersections because "everyone is made of specific details," is to realize that the only remedy is to relish everything. "To fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run" as Rudyard Kipling once wrote. For the light is never lost, the sun never sets on happy memories, especially when the moment is lived out in its entirety.

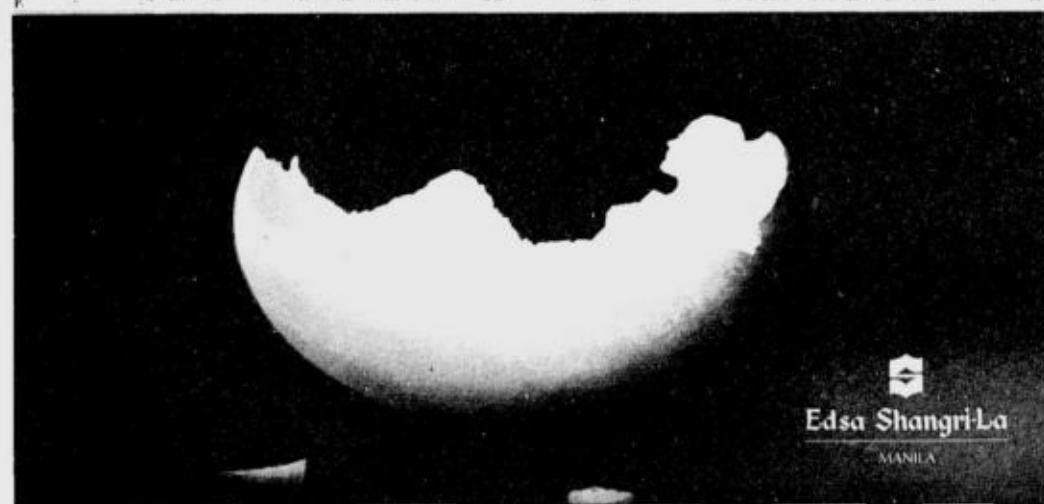
Hmmm...next time, I think I should charge my callers by the hour. Doctor Amor signing off for now.

E-mail the 4 a.m. specialist at: inca_orange@yahoo.com



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THE PROBLEM about being a model is that the occupation demands very little or almost no cerebral activity while working. It's not exactly rocket science being asked to walk down the runway, or to pose in front of the camera. After graduating from university, I became a full-time model, which also meant I was in danger of falling into the "Zoolander Syndrome." I was in dire need of brain stimulation. So believe it or not, I wanted to go back to school.

Soon enough, I was packing my bags and headed to Oxford University in England for a course in Public Speaking. Rather than living in the university dorm, I chose to lodge in with a wonderful middle-aged chef named Heather Goodwin, who rented out empty rooms of her three-floor apartment to foreign students. Upon reaching my home for the next three weeks, the first thing Heather offered me were tea and crumpets. Welcome to England, I thought to myself.

A Japanese student named Shinri Matsumoto was staying in the room across mine on the third floor. But Heather preferred to call him "Sam" since Shinri was too difficult for her English tongue to pronounce. Unfortunately for me, "Sam" preferred to call me "Laya."

From shopaholic to discount diva

Living away from my parents, I became proud of myself. From a former reckless shopaholic, I had turned into the ultimate miser. On the first day, I had bought myself a large bottle of water, and everyday after that, refilled the contents from the tap. My everyday lunch was a baguette with lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumber. If I was feeling extravagant, I would request for an additional hummus spread or perhaps a couple of falafels. I became the discount diva, and even scored myself a pair of FCUK cargo pants for 2 quid from an outlet shopping center in Bicester Village. What a bargain.

Of course, there were things worth paying the extra pound for. Like visiting museums, taking a bus, or buying a phone card—but having my fortune told for 10 pounds was not. It was during the annual St. Giles fair with my Oxford-based half-Filipino friends, Lora Woellhaf and Alex Black that we had come across a gypsy trailer. Amidst the noisy roller coasters, the smell of caramel candy and the bright lights, Lora had somehow convinced me how "authentic" and "accurate" her prophecies were. Fortune, shmfortune. I was a strong believer of freewill, and not all this hoo-ha.

As I stepped into the trailer, I was greeted by an old lady who, believe it or not, had a crystal ball right in front of her. She grabbed my palms and ran her fingers across.

"Ah, you are a foreign student, yes?" I certainly didn't look British.

"Do you have a boyfriend?" Aren't you supposed to know that?

"He loves you very much and thinks a great deal of you." Thanks for telling me.

"I think you will lead a happy life."

That's good to hear.

"Okay, now I give you the gypsies blessing, goodbye!" What the f'ck?

I paid 10 quid for that, which is 1,000 pesos. I should've smashed her crystal ball. The look on her face would have been priceless.

I encountered strange people everyday. Imagine my surprise when I found out on my first day of school that I was the only

student without a Y chromosome. As I entered the classroom, I was surrounded by a testosterone-laden class. Apparently, they haven't had a single female classmate with them since they all arrived a week earlier. "Well, hello there," said one of them. Help me.

Nevertheless, I became very good friends with them. There was Matthieu, a DJ from France who, in true Parisian style, always kissed me twice—one in each cheek—every afternoon after school. "Muwah, muwah! Au revoir Rayal!"

Patrick was a heavy-metal loving student from Germany, who wore black from head-to-toe everyday. His inner angst had prompted him to teach me all the nasty bad words in German. "Verpiss dich!"

Fred, also from Deutschland, was the exact opposite of Patrick. He came to school in his baseball cap and sweater, and loved non-violent sports such as rowing.

Vlad from Lithuania was the class bully and constantly picked on poor Michal from Poland. Vlad enjoyed boxing in his free time, while Michal occupied himself with his chemistry set after school.

Beyond the Runway

Raya Mananquil

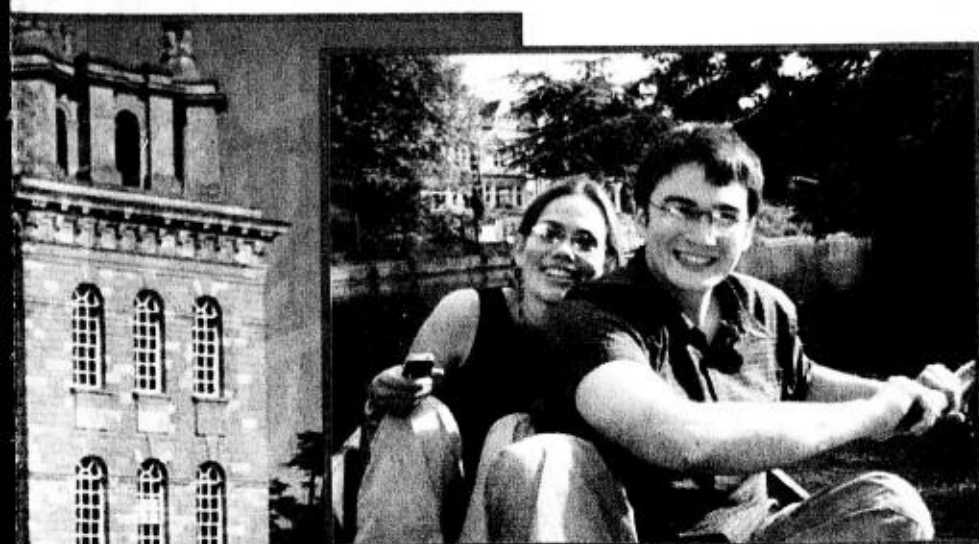


HARRY F

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"It's a r
"Oh. Is
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"No, bu
"What's
"Anima



AT THE STEPS of our building in Oxford University with Germany, Matthieu from France, Patrick from Germany, Michal was behind the camera taking our photo.



ROW, ROW, row your boat. Punting with Lora and Alex



CLUBBING at 7:30 p.m. with friends Mark, Lora and Alex.

Spotted Dick in Oxford



Potter was here. At Christ Church where they filmed the Great Hall.

and have weird and wonderful in-laws, friends, and even more bizarre ones with the locals. "You must try the spotted dick, it's lovely," insisted Heather, the lady I was staying with who almost always has a vegetarian appetite.

"What's it?" I replied, extremely puzzled. "It's a pudding," she explained. "It's baked with eggs? Because I like eggs." "Is it baked with suet?" "Yes, it's suet?" "Is it fat?"

Bloody hell.

Of course, there were more cultural experiences for me aside from encountering dubiously-named desserts. Being a huge Harry Potter fan, I was able to visit the location where they filmed the Great Hall in the movie, which is in Christ Church in Oxford. There was also Blenheim Palace which was so astounding because I got to see the home where Winston Churchill was born and raised.

My friends Lora and Alex became my personal tour guides, who took me punting during the day (a leisurely boating activity and sport in Oxford) to clubbing in the evening (apparently students begin the night at 7:30 and are drunk by 10 p.m.).

The world as my classroom

In the Public Speaking class, not only was I forced to use British lingo and spelling, but the teacher actually insisted that I rid of my Americanized accent (blame my high school year in West Lafayette, Indiana) and speak with an English accent. What baffled me is that they're so keen on adding extra vowels (labor as labour?), and yet too lazy to pronounce a syllable (Gloucester pronounced as "Glous-ter", or Magdalene as "Mog-dleen"). I say po-tay-toe, you say poh-tah-toh.

The end of my three-week stay gave me mixed sentiments. As I hopped onto the bus taking me to Heathrow, I couldn't help but feel sad to leave and yet happy to come back home. I was leaving to my student life to go back to my life as a model again.

The learning experience for me did not necessarily come from books. There is always a paradigm shift each time I travel, and the world becomes my classroom. As the British would say, "Cheers to that."

Want to try the spotted dick and study in Oxford University? Call Institute for Foreign Study at 812-1187 / 8126229 or check out their website at www.ifsphil.com

E-mail the author at eatyourtofu@yahoo.com

the blokes. Fred from... and Vlad from Lithuania. Poor

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A thought from a non-reader.

A mind on the blink can be a real turn-off. If you need a bit of stimulation, try reading for a change. Just a thought.

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Manure Panis Guy

DIGITAL ARTWORK BY MARTIN VALDES



Dear Man About Town,

I've saved enough money to buy a new cell phone. Should I buy the newest Nokia, or the Ericsson, or should I keep on saving until I have enough cash to get a Treo 650?

SO I'M waiting in line at Coffee Bean one morning along with other caffeine mendicants, when an old classmate from years back spots me. He comes over and introduces me to his friend, a work colleague from the province. I am pleasantly surprised to find out that, according to my old classmate, his friend is a big fan of my humble column (I've never met any big fans, just my mother). Throughout this whole exchange, this supposed "fan" hadn't said anything; he just stood there grin-

Man about town



Chuck Dy

ning silently, perhaps overcome and a tad bit star struck due to our close proximity. As my Café Mocha arrived—I was hoping my "big fan" would offer to pay for it—I thanked him for his patronage of my writing and asked him slyly what he liked best about my column.

"Manure panis guy!" he gushed.

Comedy is, at best, an exercise in relativity, and at this moment, I saw nothing humorous about the situation. A total stranger, who purported to be an admirer, had just called me, or my style of writing, the stuff of overripe fertilizer. Criticism is part and parcel of the industry, but at ten in the morning, before the first sip of coffee, are below-the-belt conditions. If my biggest fan thought I wrote crap for a living, what did my detractors think of my style? Mayhap, he was right, and my abilities as a writer had been greatly exaggerated by the charity of kind friends. Or possibly, I did have a modicum of talent but my topics were irrelevant and outdated, like panis manure. Or it could be that....

"He reads your column every Saturday," my classmate interrupted my runaway train of thought, "and he always says the same thing about you: Man, you're the funniest guy."

Communication breakdown

Communication has ever been a tricky concept, a limerick of human evolution that depends on the quality of the recital and the empathy of the audience. Anything that involves more than one entity is subject to disaster and the very definition of communication prerequisites a plurality. (Contrary to a mangling of Zen, one does not communicate with one's self; that is called introspection). In fact, the brief history of human existence can be summarized by our attempts to communicate with one another, highlighted by the various triumphs and tragedies resulting from our efforts to be understood. The great inventions that have propelled mankind forward—from the Gutenberg press to the Internet—are all tools of conceptual conveyance. The notable follies of history are likewise offspring of communication gone awry. How many disputes were instigated by a handicap of accent or language? How many wars could have been averted if people sat down face-to-face? How many jelly doughnuts would have been spared a history of redundant Presidential references if only JFK had been tutored in better German?

The fantastic irony of this phenomenon is that it is extremely difficult to justify our gains in the harsh light of our losses. We

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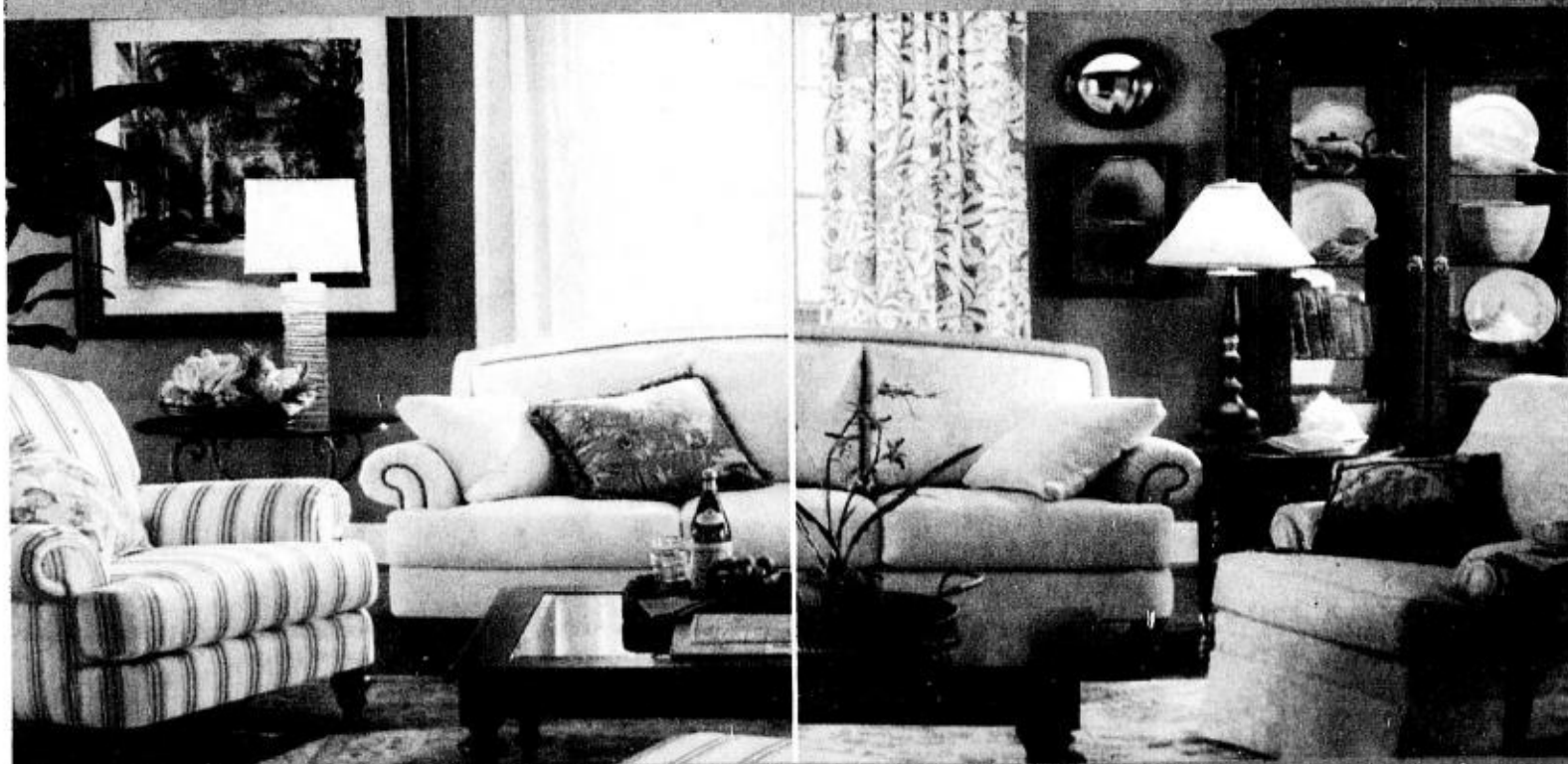
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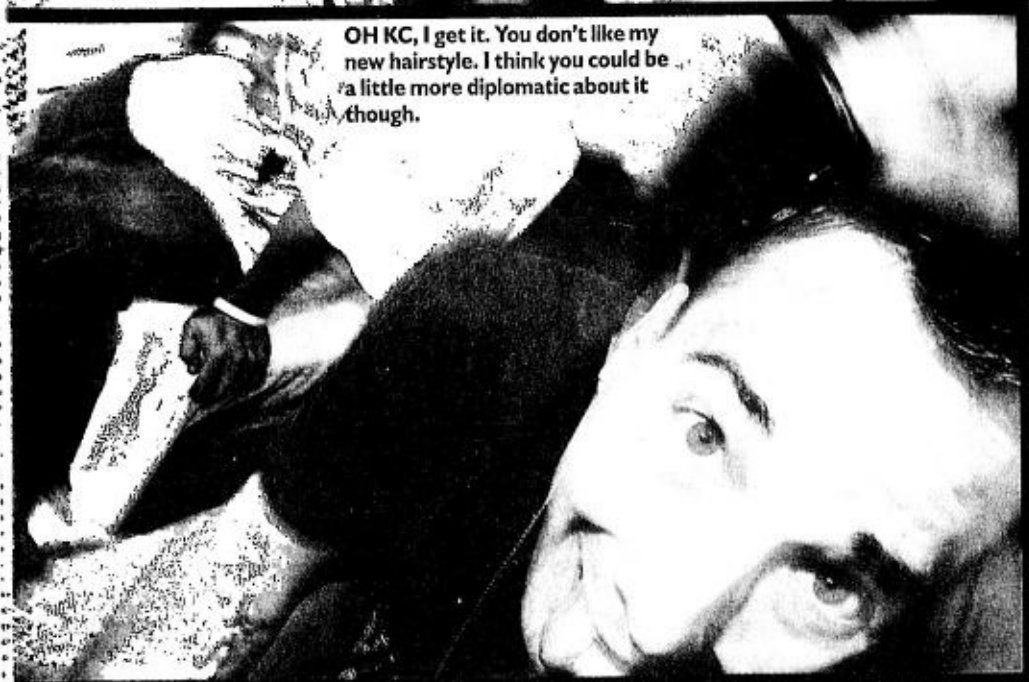
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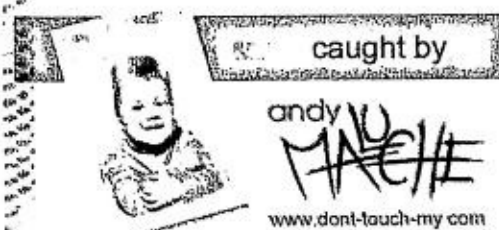
OH KC, I get it. You don't like my
new hairstyle. I think you could be
a little more diplomatic about it
though.



WHAT can I say, nice tattoo



YEAH, I had a few of
those, too.



FROM the very beginning the competition was dominated by none else than your friends. Andy Maluche on my fabulous horse Blue Stallion. Only after the third round did one of the judges notice the non-regulation runners on Blue Stallion. Needless to say we got disqualified right away. They didn't stop me from grabbing the biggest trophy and 3 beers and galloping off into the sunset.

WHAT: The Kamiseta Cup 2005 Show Jumping Championships attracted Le Creme de la Creme of the society. Mikee Jaworski and Joker Arroyo made a new Philippine show jumping record of 1.74m. In 1978, Steven Virata held the previous record of 1.66m. Kamiseta owners Gunn and Cris Roque gave out trophies and cash prizes to the winning riders.

WHERE: They all came to the greenest grounds of the Enrique Zobel field of the Manila Polo Club on a beautiful day just perfect for the relaxed Ascot-inspired event.

WHO: Tim Yap and Tessa Prieto-Valdes tried to get Borgy and Ormusa to throw horseshoes around the premises while MTV's KC Montero asked embarrassing questions to Ana Banana and Mikee Jaworski

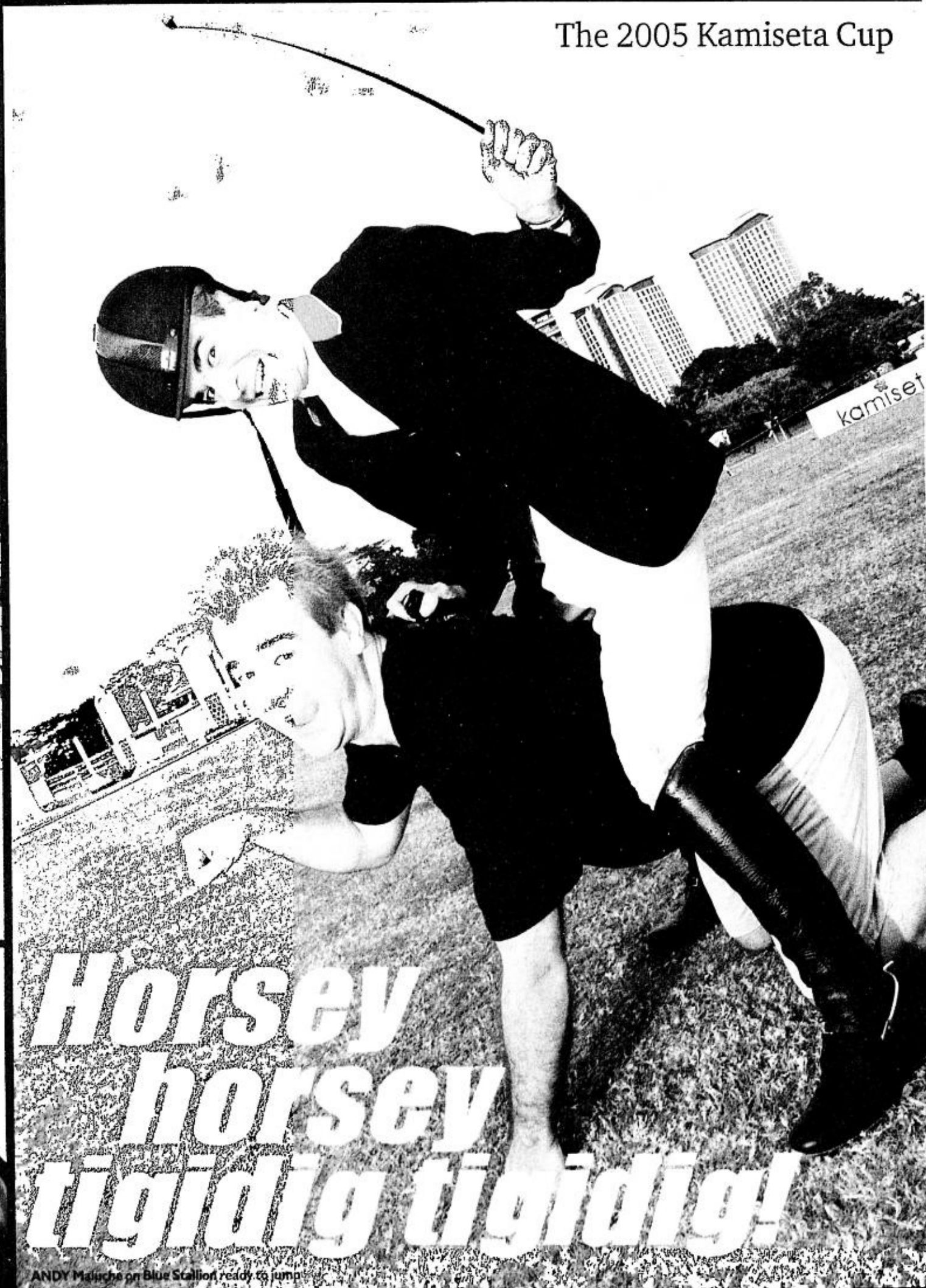
WHAT ELSE: I had my fair share of those fun colored cocktails that were served.

AND: I eventually got caught while frolicking with Blue Stallion in the pool and I had to give the trophy back but they let me keep the beers.



HOST Tessa Prieto-Valdes was the most
appropriately dressed for the occasion

XENG Zulueta had her bit to chew on



ANDY Maluche on Blue Stallion ready to jump

CAT JUAN
likes her
horses, too



I WON! I won! I won!



BORGY knows two wines are
better than one



APA NG
work...
take it all



WELL, IT
happened before

Semana Santa is coming to town!

WITH the approach of Semana Santa, one of the Christian world's holiest seasons, expect the whole metropolis to resemble a ghost town. Most restaurants, bars and theaters will be closed for several days. TV (at least the regular free TV stations) and radio will go off the air. Think "The Day After Tomorrow." Many families will take full advantage of the holidays to take that oft postponed trip out of town. Think "National Lampoon's European Vacation." Metro Manila on this rare occasion will be a driver's and pedestrian's paradise, with very few cars on the road and crowds and traffic jams virtually extinct. Again, think "The Day After Tomorrow." The serene and tranquil pace and the absence of urban chaos will be a welcome respite for my soul. Awww...

For those who will be staying in town, there will still be live band performances in favorite watering holes except from March 24 to March 25. We recommend Conspiracy [59 Visayas Ave., Project 6, Quezon City, Tel. 453-2170] for alternative bands that perform their original music. 70's Bistro however will be closed from March 21 to 26. The other live entertainment venues that host many cover bands include Dish [The Loop, ELJ Center, ABS-CBN Compound, Mother Ignacia St., Tel. 413-0603, 413-0614], Ratsky [243 Tomas Morato St. cor. Scout Fuentebella, Tel. 373-9881 to 83] and Metro Bar [47 West Ave., Tel. 374-7505] all in Quezon City. All the choirs are also gonna be busy in Church, if you care to see them.

In Makati, we have Tavern On The Square [2/F Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City, Tel. 757-4484], The Conservatory at The Peninsula Manila, [corner of Ayala and Makati Avenues, Tel. 810-3456, 812-3456] and Strumm's [110 Jupiter St., Bel-Air, Tel. 895-4636] and the streets of R Burgos for entertainment.

The venues in Manila that offer live bands include Ratsky [1663 J. Bocobo St., Malate, Tel. 523-8608 to 10] and Suburbia [Alonzo Cor. Adriatico Streets, Malate, Tel. 450-1685/86, 523-9760, 400-5328].

Although 24/7 has compiled



many events for this week, we urge you to confirm the operating schedules of the venues before making any plans.

March 19, Saturday

Quezon City and neighboring city Marikina will play host to big rock acts. Current sensation Kitchie Nadal will be at ABS-CBN party place for Unicef at 10:00 p.m. then proceeds to the Marikina Sports Complex for Rockista Reloaded at 1:00 a.m. with bands like Session Road. Mongols led by former Eraserheads frontman Ely Buendia is the featured band at Dish. Folk artist Bayang Barrios will perform at Conspiracy. Jazz aficionados should not miss Johnny Alegre and Affinity at the Shangri-la Plaza.

March 21, Monday

Again, it's at Conspiracy where you find great alternative artists. Tonight, it is Gary Granada. Greenbelt 3 offers Freestyle at Tavern on the Square or Romy Posadas & Bernie Uy at Merk's.

March 22, Tuesday

It is early in the week but many sought after bands are performing with MYMP at Tavern on the Square, the energetic Hyperbeat at Ratsky Manila, Spirit of 67 at the

Captain's Bar for a dose of the happy 60s music, mainstay showband Cruzin' Band at Merk's and Side A at 19 East, Sucat.

March 23, Wednesday

The inspiring Noel Cabangon will be at Conspiracy while 70's band Kearney Street at Strumm's. You have one more chance to catch Side A this evening at Tavern on the Square. Yes, they are still alive!

March 24 and 25, Thursday and Friday

Since most establishments will be closed, you may want to explore a part of the city that you have rarely seen. Check out the restored walled city of Intramuros, the site of two cavernous and historic churches, the Manila Cathedral and San Agustin Church. Several Catholic Filipinos will gather here to do their Visita Iglesia or traditional Easter visit of the churches. I sound like Susan Calo-Medina. You may want to walk on the walls and appreciate structures that span four centuries. I sound like Cory Quirino. Other churches to check out in Manila are the San Sebastian Church, known as the only all steel church in Asia and the Las Piñas church that houses the Bamboo organ. I sound like Father Reuter.

Schedules may change without prior notice. Email your skeds every Wednesday to e-mail address events@mag24-7.com and mag24_7@yahoo.com or fax number 892-0689.

24/7

Janine Cuenca-Dario



Manure Pan's Guy

From page G1

have indeed proven to have the most exquisite brains on this planet by developing our means of communication to such a comprehensive extent in a relatively short time to have impressed every other organism on Earth if they could so wish to care. A mere five thousand years after papyrus, we're surfing cyberspace while other mammals are still marking their territory with pee. We've got phones and gadgets with enough processing power to launch a nuclear warhead. We have media outlets of ridiculous proportions, enough to saturate every sensory receiver in the body a hundred times over. Yes, we are so very far removed from our animal brethren, closer in propinquity to Godliness in terms of approaching omniscience.

But in our quest for divinity, have we forsaken our humanity? A thousand channels of television and most of them are following the Michael Jackson trial as if the verdict will reveal the mysteries of the universe. Cellular phones so smart they've got memberships in MENSA, have diminished our spelling abilities to Neanderthal levels. And the Internet, the most incredible tool for human communication possibly ever conceived, is a technology driven by the likes of Paris Hilton and Pamela Anderson giving blondes an even worse name. Yes, we may soon know everything there is to know, and not know a thing about how to use it properly. Knowledge without wisdom, my friends, is like having sex with an idiot—it's just f**king stupid. But I digress.

Speak easy

The point being that just because we communicate with impressive complexity doesn't mean we understand each other any better. The opposite must be true, in that the simplest means are usual-

ly the most effective.

The advent of illusory diplomacy oft labeled political correctness makes this simplicity a dangerous option, though. No longer can I just say, "I just bought a bootleg CD of Michael Jackson from that fat, black midget in the squatter area." Instead, I'd have purchased an illegal copy of an album by the suspected-but-not-as-of-yet-convicted music artist Michael Jackson from the gravity-encouraged, vertically challenged, tint-pigmented vendor located in the economically depressed region of the city. This way, I offend only common sense.

Great confusion

Aside from the necessities of modern tact, advances in technology have likewise caused great confusion in the communication lines. A telephone's main purpose used to be the brief exchange of information. Now, the exchange is anything but brief, and it can hardly be classified as information. The Philippines alone generates millions of dollars in text messages every year and most of them consist of lame testaments of affection, terrible jokes, or bizarre squiggles called Emoticons (which I originally imagined as a branch of Transformer robots that fought alongside the Autobots versus the evil Decepticons.) The cellular phones of today can surf the Internet remotely, take pixilated photos of a couple "doing it in the bathroom of Venezia, pare", and even supply you with your daily horoscope. Actual conversation is incidental.

But these are but stories in the Babel Tower, and as long as we stray from the formula of simplicity, we will never fully understand one another.

So as to your question, I have decided NOT to answer it. There are technical authors more equipped and authorized to furnish you with a better answer. But more importantly, I DON'T CARE. Not that it's a dumb question, just beyond my

realm of interest. Like a phone call from a former relationship that ended in a sour note, I'd rather not answer. What I have chosen to do instead is to answer the question you DIDN'T ask, but SHOULD'VE. How do we communicate better?

Effectiveness vs. efficiency

And the answer, so obvious and obscured, is to speak clearly and listen carefully. On paper, it may appear remarkable that we have moved from smoke signals to email, but progress is determined by effectiveness more than efficiency. Certainly it is a great convenience to be able to receive messages from a loved one instantly from across the globe, but if it achieves ambiguity because he or she forgot to punctuate it with a smiley face, then mankind is in a lot of trouble.

Nokias, Ericssons, and Treos, oh my! So speak clearly, with your own distinct voice, in the comfort of your own linguistic reach, and say what you mean to say, unhindered by political correctness, but sensitive to your audience's limitations and experience. So listen carefully, digesting every word, accommodating of whatever the message may be, prepared to invite debate but unrestricted by our own belief system.

And that's all there is to it. Nokia, Ericsson, Treo: These are not better tools for communication, just fancier ones. The next World War will probably be triggered by a tragic inanity of miscommunication, such as P Diddy accidentally insulting Jacques Chirac by calling him a "phat French brother." In such an occasion, I would suggest buying a Treo because it is heavier and can be used as a missile weapon.

To my number one fan, if you're reading, for my lack of comic relief this week, I apologize that I wasn't the pan's guy. But then again, hopefully I wasn't manure either.

(email author at bohemiansamurai@yahoo.com)

Fun under the Sun

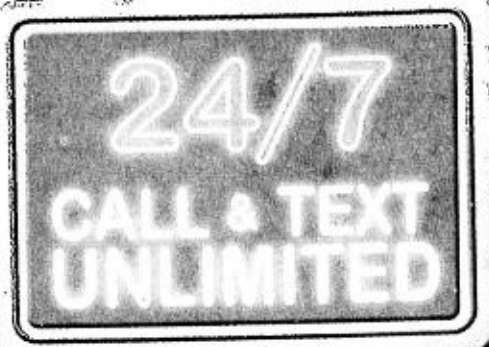
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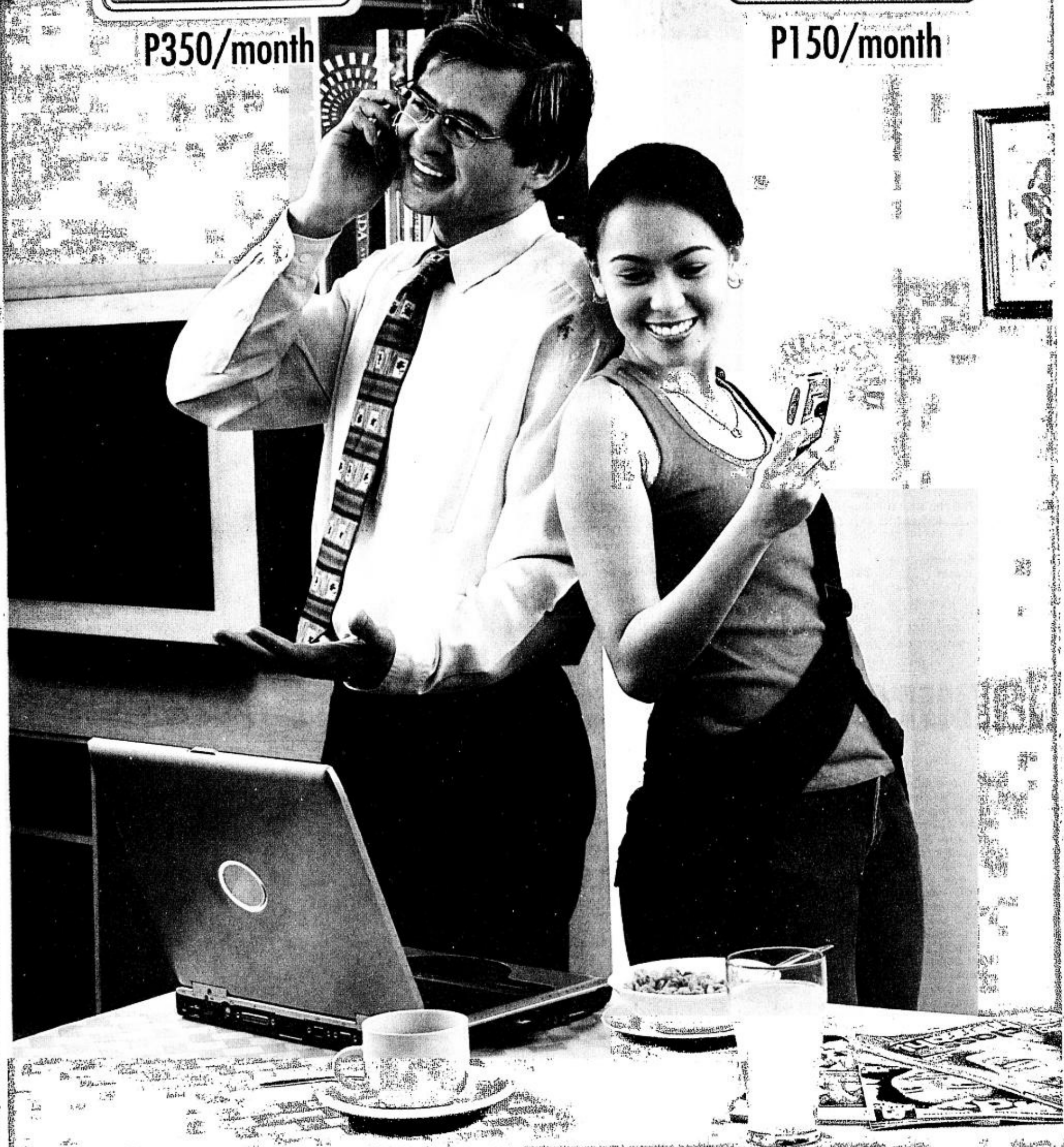


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Free SMS	250	100	350	200	400	250	600	400	900	500
Airtime Rates										
• Sun to Sun	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	4.00
• Sun to other mobiles	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
• Sun to landline	6.50	6.25	6.50	6.25	6.00	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50
NDD	10.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	9.50	9.00	9.00	0.50	9.00	0.50
IDD	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30	\$0.30
Regular SMS										
• Sun to Sun	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.00
• Sun to other mobiles	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
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From White to Warmth

THINGS looked warm behind a pair of rose-colored-flea-market lenses on Valentines month. Yes, I did blow through days alone hiding behind the disguise of artificial vibrancy, throwing caution to the wind despite the semi-icy cobblestone streets of the city.

This was to be the first time I were to spend the month of love with only the company of some mushy OPM music, and a family of healthy pigeons who had their own baguette-crumb fiestas around my feet as people rushed in and out of boulangeries to prepare the munchies for their romantic feasts.

Valentine's day itself was the day that I unintentionally set up to be exceptionally for Me, for which my thoughts darted from one arrondissement to another in sheer delight. Although I would have liked to have a male companion spend some time with me to feel slightly more feminine (I can't decide whether to blame or thank my kuyas for robbing me of the word 'dainty') I just had so many things in my head that day that the poor thing would have probably ended up jumping into the River Seine hoping to be saved from some highly emotional blabber!

Which got me thinking... If one likes to THINK intensely, it does not necessarily mean one would SPEAK intensely. But if one does happen to LIKE talking, sometimes, that's just the way you process your thinking. And spontaneous thoughts, as well as blabber, might never make it to The Economist, but may be placed in a corner somewhere like this one (for example), not merely because of the name of who is writing it, but because life is known by everyone, processed in the heart and mind in different ways, and in a journey like yours, there will always be that wish for that somebody to take your hand along the way.

For temporary senselessness to serve the art of laughter and to relish your version of the good life, or for world-moving moments, and whatever else an experience is worth, you hope that there will always be someone who'll say "I know how this feels" and prove they actually mean it.

Is this why people like to live their own publicly private corners in cyberspace?

The universe of Blog is enormous. Topics range from complex footwear engineering to painful broken toenails; life at war to death in the streets.

There are escapists, critics, soldiers, rockers, professors, feminists, lovers, hackers, 15-year-olds going on 25, or 43-year-old

KULIT CO.

KC Concepcion



beach bums regressing to adolescent mode. Live journals are everywhere, and every day people post a piece of them onto a computer screen for everyone to see.

Do we do this just because it's fun? Or because, whether it be to drown in tears or take a chunk of something fabulous, we don't want

FROM WHITE/H2

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From White to Warmth

From page H1

to be doing it alone?

For all we know, we might be marketing something to ourselves, as much as we are to others. It might be for the literal reason of selling something to make profit, or just because you desire to create a story through which you can see everything for more or less than it really is.

A scratch on the lens

Some people may look through a pair of pink glasses and think "well this is ridiculous. Who would want to see in monotone?"

Maybe others would say "there's a scratch on the lens." Or there may be people who might just like to let themselves go into this motion picture of pink that has them watching the world for a while without actually needing to exist in it.

Whatever it is, there has got to be a reason why we might take part of our privacy and encourage the public to take a bite. Whatever happened to having a handful of close friends to tell everything to? Are computer screens really beginning to replace soul or is this a way to take more from the outside to bring more to the inside?

"I've learned to let go of my camera, and stop experiencing things in pixels. I wanted to be in the moment and live in it with all senses," a friend once said.

Both the Filipino and the French have this natural focus on food and drink as a way of socializing and staying in touch. But the difference is that, if a Filipino fete thrives in the more the merrier idea of a classic social-circle bonding session, the French seem to be more collectively intimate.

And though not all things are what they seem, it's true that a girl on this side of town will most likely have a much smaller living space than others, which makes a fete seem like you've just stepped into a luxurious chocolate commercial. And no matter how broke or 'poor' she is, get-togethers will always happen for the sake of keeping a type of bond, and I'm always curious how elaborate parties are thrown in even the most cramped apartments that are up at the top floor in a building with no elevator.

Sensual liberty

Things are also always done with style, as is a live journal—but the French way is to choose how much intimacy to let into the space by meddling with design and by necessity. This becomes the space where everybody begins to eat at the same time (encouraged to eat more than the one beside you), where there is a sensual liberty for the music down to the cigarette smoke in the room, and where what you do for a living is never an important part of the conversation (a faux pas even for good friends).

In a corner you will find two friends that have just met, talking about the latest football match with a cocktail in hand, in another, a group of three that are both agreeing and disagreeing on the value of a film or novel (value meaning both production and price), and the hostess' petit poodle resting on a pillow by the front door, exhausted from having gone around to socialize with guests earlier in the evening.

You will also find that a woman here is probably less afraid of getting old, and that she never wants to give much of herself away when it comes to dealing with potential love.

There is never a need to define things up front, allowing things instead to evolve genuinely and naturally. She has a sensual relationship between her body and the food she brings to it (she can have a modest three-course meal and a glass of champagne all

alone); between her ideas of politics and culture, between her grandmother's pair of earrings and her own simple hairstyle.

In this space, everything is warm and genuine. And it doesn't take a whole lot of people or limitless electronic space to find it.

By the end of the month, despite the fact that, STILL, this modern world of technology found a way to make me come home with a memory card that stubbornly stepped out to capture la vie (quite literally) en rose, seeing a splash of pink to warm up the white city mood (temperature really does affect disposition!) without having to hide behind the disguise of bright, pre-mature Spring colors was much needed.

So much love

I no longer felt so alone despite having nobody's hand to defrost with my own. There was so much love and warmth in everything—two little girls bonding over a toy top (hardly ever seen anymore in familiar households), two sleepy, mixed-breed brother pups resting intertwined with each other in a pet shop, a pigeon basking in the March sun, a Filipino couple walking from China Town with a bag of ingredients that looked hilariously familiar (think Kare Kare or Sinigang) or even in the thought that the timely crustacean death of Bubba the Lobster made it on the MSN news!

Although the tremendous trails of thought scattered all over the web might never make it on traditional newspapers, anyone's entries are equally worth being paid attention to.

No matter what is being said, there is a reason behind the gesture, and for us to listen to each other, as well as listen to ourselves—what your body is trying to tell you, or what your brain is pushing you to think, or what your heart is trying to get you to feel—is to stay connected.

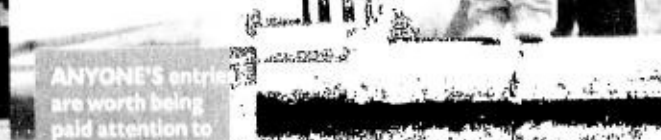
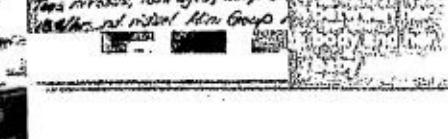
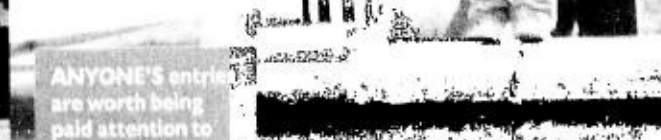
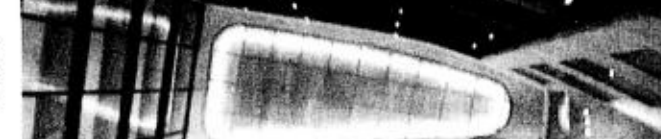
Old-fashioned

Although live journals are an interesting way to keep track of friends, life and times, there is still that old-fashioned manner of living that does not at all require the help of a computer.

Don't forget that you are free to do whatever you want with your space outside of a machine, where everything is just fabulously tangible. Where you get wrapped within the hug you once asked for, where the birds fly up high and come back down to feed, where you FEEL the chuckles and HEAR the heart that has fallen in (or out of, God forbid) love.

Knowing what's going on in each others lives reminds us that no matter where we are, who we are, or what we have become, we are all human, sharing the same messy, beautiful, twisted world where whatever floats one's boat will be that, which rocks one's cradle.

wish upon a silver cloud crawling across the moonbeams



EVERYTHING warm and genuine

ANYONE'S entries are worth being paid attention to

Superfriends

From page 140



Miguel Fernandez
The craziest thing I've done is: Falling in love-love-love After that, people told me That I was: A great retard I go beyond the limits when: I'm still in love-love-love
E-mail: just_mof@hotmail.com

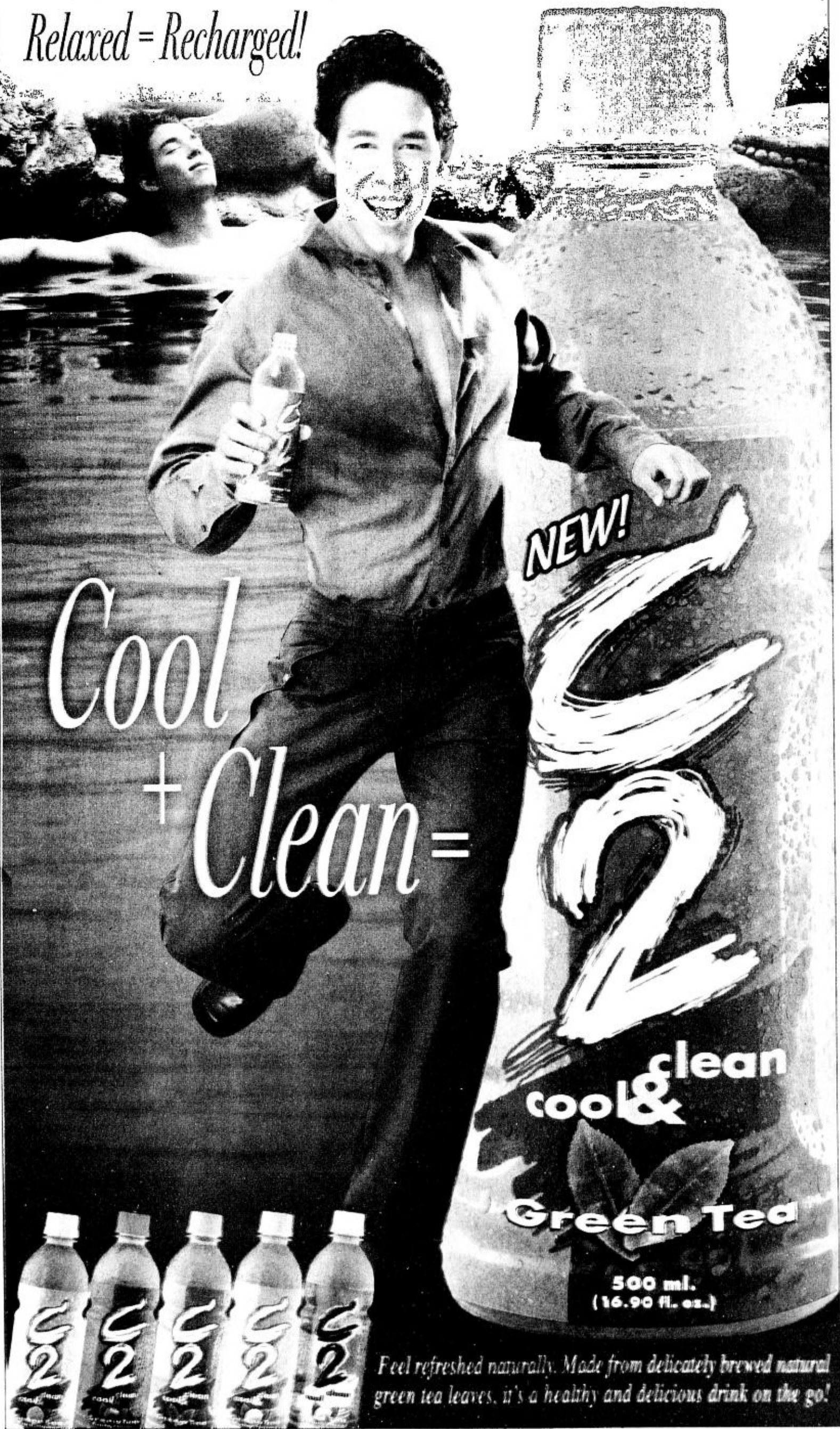


Jena Daza
The craziest thing I've done is: Moving half way across the world for a guy. After that, people told me That I was: an effing idiot! I go beyond the limits when: I don't have any!
E-mail: jenaaaaaa@hotmail.com



Pepe Cervado
The craziest thing I've done is: I ran and jumped naked around the garden of our retreat house while one of the priests was standing by the driveway. After that, people told me That I was: Truly different! I go beyond the limits when: Limits get in my way!!
E-mail: Jmcerv2002@yahoo.com

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C2 Green Tea: It's delicious, it's health-tea!

Everybody drinks iced tea these days. What they don't realize is that most of the time, what they are drinking is more sugar than tea!

The good news is there's a new kind of healthy iced tea available in the market. New C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea, made from delicately brewed natural tea leaves so you not only feel deliciously refreshed, you'll also get all the health benefits of green tea.

Stay fit to a Tea! Green tea's numerous health benefits:

It's an antioxidant! Studies have shown that green tea has many health-giving properties. It is a powerful antioxidant which means it can help protect the body from harmful micro-organisms. Because of this antioxidant property, it is also recognized as a helpful tool in preventing the development of cancer cells.

Helps burn fat! Green tea is also good for those people trying to lose or maintain their weight. Green tea has a thermogenic effect that produces heat in the body that results in fat burning. It also initiates faster metabolism causing the body to burn fat at a faster rate.

Controls cholesterol! Green tea thins the blood and decreases the possibility of cholesterol formation inside the blood vessels. Instead of absorbing the cholesterol, green tea prompts the body to increase the amount of fat excreted as waste. This reduces the risks on the heart and blood pressure.

Tea-licious!

Unlike some other things that are healthy, C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea is actually really delicious. People who are used to softdrinks and sweet juices will surely enjoy its light and refreshing taste. It won't be hard to convert to a habit of drinking something healthier and better for you. Even picky children and teenagers may enjoy C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea's yummy taste.

Spa in a Sip

Much like going to the spa, C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea is both relaxing and recharging. Its delicious taste, especially when served cold, is very refreshing while all the real tea benefits make you feel reinvigorated! So anytime you need to feel both refreshed and recharged, a sip of C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea is all you need. It's like experiencing an inner spa.

Tea Take-out

All this goodness is now bottled and ready to be consumed anytime, anywhere. All at a very reasonable price!

C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea is available in convenient and resealable plastic PET bottles. It comes in five delicious flavors: Green Tea Plain, Lemon, Apple, Peach and Iced Tea Lemon. The suggested retail price of the 350 ml bottle is only P10, while the bigger 500 ml is only P15.

It's now available at your favorite supermarkets and convenience stores. So grab a chilled bottle of C2 Cool & Clean Green Tea and enjoy a new kind of healthy refreshment.





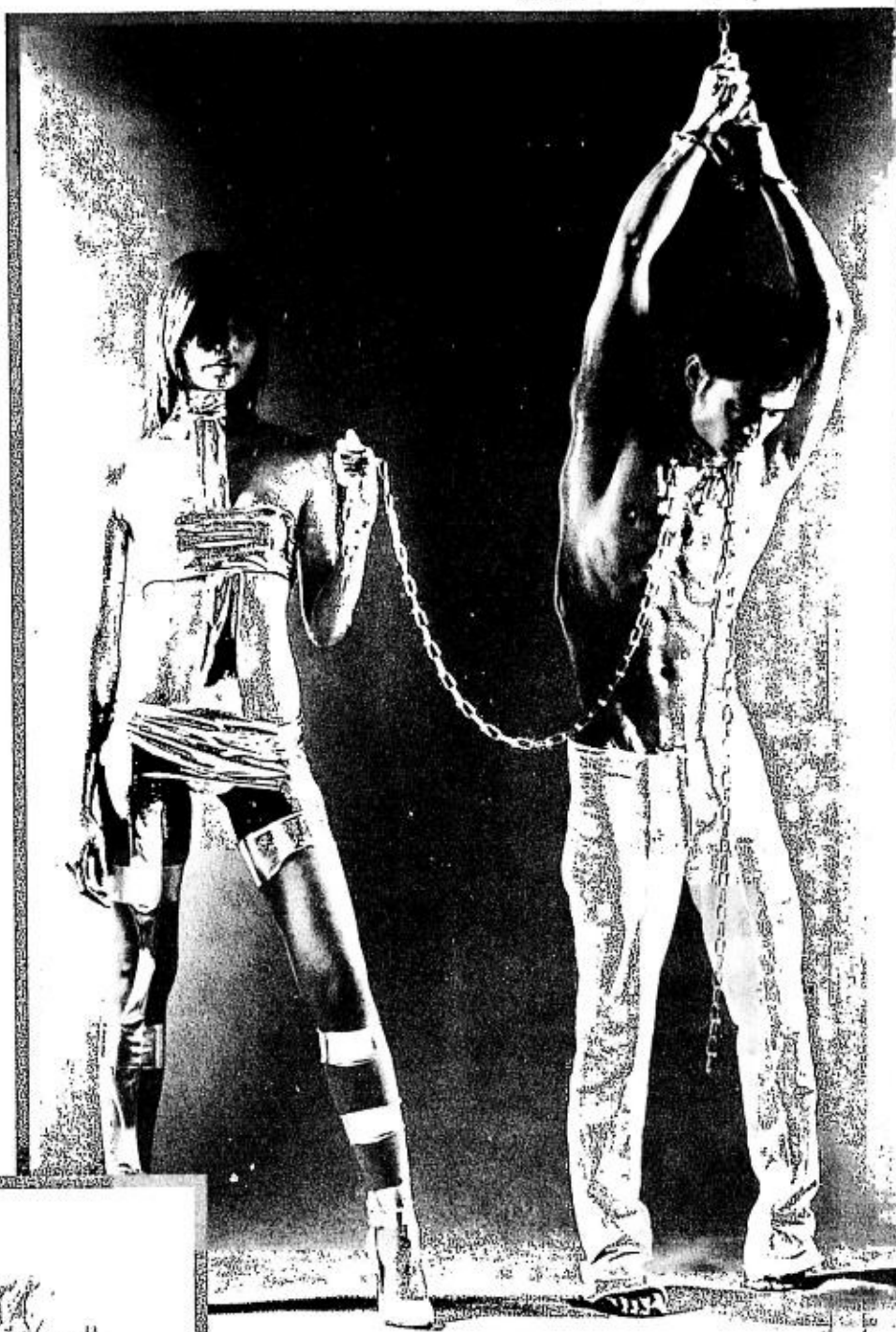
ALWAYS BELIEVE IN YOUR SOUL. Chinggay Andrada and the power of gold

Victor Consunji wants to take what he has learned locally and apply it, improve it, and hopefully showcase it alongside the best photographers in the world.



CLEOPATRA would have been envious of Olivia Daytia

Heavy m



NOBODY CAN STEEL THIS. Raya Mananquil and Corey Wills display their chain links



BARBED Borgy Manotoc in blue steel



BOY BLUE. Brent Javier in a metallic glance



FISHER OF (WO)MEN. Paolo Soller's catch of the day



TINSELTWIN STARS. Rissa Samson and Nicolette 2 model party mode

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

etal-morphosis

Photos by Vic Consunji
STYLING BY CHARMINE PALERMO
MAKEUP BY LEO POSADAS

SOME like it hot, indeed. Young photographer Victor Consunji got into the field of photography for the sheer love of capturing beauty.

"My dad used to carry a camera all the time, bugging us with endless pictures at family gatherings—I guess it rubbed off on me—his love for creating images. So when I got the chance to shoot a major campaign for Rustan's, I grabbed the opportunity and it's been an amazing experience ever since," Vic



Tim Yap

tor told me at his exhibit of metallic-inspired images at Absinth, aptly entitled "Metal-morphosis."

Your columnist was one of the subjects in the exhibit, and alongside Consunji collaborators Charmaine Palermo as stylist and Leo Posadas as makeup artist, they were able to transform 25 different style set personalities into glistening, shimmering works of art. The synergy of his group was seam-

less—the vibe fun and creative. In the hands of his team, I became a silver robot—how timely.

Skin and steel

Other subjects flashed a lot of skin to contrast with the metal touches. No stranger to posing nude himself, Consunji has also disrobed for the Metro Body calendar and his latest cover for the Philippine Tatler's Most Eligible issue. In fact it is safe to say that he is the most photographed photographer in the city now.

DJs Manolet Dario alternated on the spin table with Robbie Carmona and Nicolette Bell, as Marc Nelson, Geoff Brizz and Chinggay Andrada, who is Vic's girlfriend, took turns for the hosting chores.

What is his personal metamorphosis?

"I wanna shoot for international magazines and shoot global campaigns because that's where my inspiration stems from. I want to take what I've learned locally and apply it, improve it, and hopefully showcase it alongside the best photographers in the world."

So why the metal theme? I casually ask the young visual sniper.

"Uh, because it's hot?"

Victor Consunji's Metal-morphosis will be on display until April 15.

For all BPI cardholders, everytime you use your BPI card at Absinth from now until April 15, you'll receive a free cosmo or vodka Red Bull plus a free gift from Shiseido.



ICED TEASE. Isabel Roces opts to freeze with diamonds

Nurture your child's gift this summer!



Summer Workshops for Kids
April 4 to May 28, 2005

Summer time is a great time for your pre-schooler to shine! At Promil Pre-School's Camp ProGifted, children ages 3 to 7 will get a chance to develop his potential in fun and exciting ways. Facilitated by highly trained, publicly recognized experts, each workshop at Camp ProGifted is designed to help nurture the gift in your child.

Nurture the Reader



Give your child a head start in school with this special reading workshop that fosters a love for reading through exercises that will help widen his vocabulary and help develop his language skills. Facilitated by The Reading Teachers (TRT).

Venue: Fully Booked Powerplant Mall, Rockwell

Schedule Options:

Group A (3 years old) - April 4-29, MW, 10:00-11:30am
Group B (4 years old) - April 5-30, TThS 10:00-11:30am
Group C (5 years old) - May 2-21, MWFS 10:00-11:30am
Group D (6-7 years old) - May 2-21, MWFS 2:00-3:30
No. of Sessions: 12

Nurture the Artist



Encourage your child's artistic genius with an arts and crafts workshop that will allow him to develop his creativity while exploring lines, shapes and colour. Facilitated by Art Adventures.

Venue: Art Adventures

Studio 116, VA Rufino St., Makati City

Schedule Options:

MWF
Group A - 9:00-10:30 am
Group B - 10:30 am -12:30 pm
Group C - 1:00-2:30 pm
Group D - 2:30 -4:00 pm
No. of Sessions: 12

Nurture the Dancer



Bring out your child's grace, flexibility and agility with classical ballet classes. Facilitated by the Claravall Dance Studio (an affiliate of the Royal Academy of Dance, London).

Venue: Claravall School

of Classical Ballet

Teoville 3, Sucat, Parañaque City

Schedule Options:

MWF
Group A - 9:00-10:00 am
Group B - 10:00-11:00 am
Group C - 11:00 am-12:00 nn
Group D - 1:00-2:00 pm
No. of Sessions: 18

Nurture the Singer



Help your child give voice to his feelings with singing lessons that improve vocal quality and projection, and develop stage presence during performances. Facilitated by the Center for Pop Music.

Venue Options: Center for Pop Music Branches

• Cubao, Quezon City - TTh, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• Visayas Ave., Quezon City - MW, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• Quirino Highway, Lagra, Quezon City - MW, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• McArthur Highway, Malolos City - WF, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• McArthur Highway, Valenzuela City - TTh, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• Rocas Ave., Quezon City - ThS, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City - MW, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
• Binondo, Manila - TTh, 10:30 - 12:00 nn
No. of Sessions: 12

Nurture the Actor



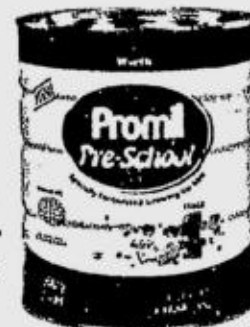
Put your child in the spotlight with a stage-acting workshop aimed at increasing his self-confidence and honing his self-expression skills. Facilitated by Ma. Kristine Chynna B. Roxas, Palanca-winner and resident teacher from Tanghalang Pilipino.

Venue: Centro Flamenco, Rockwell Drive, Makati City

Schedule Options:

M-Th
Group A (3 years old) - 1:00-5:00 pm
Group B (4 years old) - 1:00-5:00 pm
Group C (5 years old) - 1:00-5:00 pm
Group D (6-7 years old) - 1:00-5:00 pm
No. of Sessions: 12

Nurture the gift.
For kids 3 years onwards



Wyeth

Nurture the Pre-schooler's Gift this Summer at Camp ProGifted

With school out, it won't be long before your pre-schooler starts looking for other activities to keep him busy. This makes summer time the best time to give him fun and exciting new ways to help nurture his gift. Recognizing the pre-school years as the stage where a child first shows signs of giftedness, Promil Pre-School now offers Camp ProGifted—a series of workshops designed to nurture the gift in children ages 3 to 7.

Camp ProGifted offers five different workshops that help pre-schoolers discover and develop their gifts in arts and crafts, reading, acting, dance and singing.

Nurturing the Artist

Camp ProGifted's art workshop gives pre-schoolers the chance to realize their creative potential through arts and crafts. Projects include making frames, dolls, masks and puppets, as well as painting and cake decorating. ProGifted Campers will also be introduced to the geniuses of art and explore different art techniques. They will be encouraged to be spontaneous, interpret what they see, express how they feel, and work as a team.

The art workshop will be facilitated by Art Adventures, a member of the Art-for-Peace Organization. Apart from teaching the basics of arts and crafts, Art Adventures advocates world peace and environmental protection.

Nurturing the Reader

Camp ProGifted's reading workshop proposes a literature-based literacy program to develop a genuine love for reading through critical thinking, grammar, and oral language development, and word study. Pre-schoolers will be given a chance to explore and appreciate books appropriate for their age.

The curriculum is developed and will be taught by The Reading Teachers (TRT), a pool of reading instructors which includes Dr. Dina Joana S. Ocampo, Ph.D., Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology from the School of Human Sciences, University of Surrey, Guildford, United Kingdom.

Nurturing the Actor

The acting workshop at Camp ProGifted uses children's theatre as a means to develop a pre-schooler's personality and interpersonal skills. Sessions aim to cultivate imagination, sensitivity, language capacity and social skills, as well as develop leadership skills and self-confidence. ProGifted Campers will also learn group dynamics through lessons on the monologue and dialogue, role-playing, performance, skits, vignettes and improvisation.

Award-winning director-playwright Ma. Kristine Chynna B. Roxas brings her extensive theatre workshop experience to Camp ProGifted's acting workshop as facilitator. A first place winner at the 2003 Don Carlos Palanca Awards, Ms. Roxas was also named 2001 Playwright of the Year by the UP Theatre Council. She is also Stage Manager for the Tanghalang Pilipino at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Nurturing the Dancer

Classical ballet training comprises Camp ProGifted's dance workshop, which is aimed at helping pre-schoolers develop body coordination, musicality and rhythm, and enjoy the freedom of creative movement. A comprehensive and structured balance of technique, music and performance, lessons follow modules used by the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) in London.

The dance workshop will be facilitated by the Claravall School of Classical Ballet, an affiliate of the RAD. The School is led by Mariinda Claravall-Yee, one of 12 teachers in the Philippines to be awarded the Teaching Certificate by the RAD, and former head of the RAD Registered Teachers Association of the Philippines. She is currently ballet mistress at the British School Manila.

Nurturing the Singer

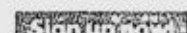
Camp ProGifted's singing workshop focuses on the elements of music such as rhythm, pitch, melody and volume. Classes will be highlighted by lessons in projection and stage presence, to teach pre-schoolers to sing on stage.

Long recognized for producing stand-out performers, the Center for Pop Music, Philippines will be facilitating the workshop through their vast network of studios.

Nurturing your child's Gift with the 3 P's

Engaging your child in activities like the Camp ProGifted workshops is part of the proper care he needs to allow his gift to develop to the fullest. Proper care, together with Parents and Proper nutrition make up the 3 P's that experts say are required for nurturing giftedness in children.

Promil Pre-School is specially formulated to help provide the proper nutrition needed to nurture the gift in children 3 years and onwards. It contains ProGifted Formula 4 that helps enhance your pre-schooler's gift at the time when it begins to show. This scientifically balanced formula includes the right amounts of iron to help cognitive and psychomotor development, Vitamin A to help improve eyesight, and energy-giving nutrients to help develop motor skills. Combined with your unwavering parental support and activities like Camp ProGifted, Promil Pre-school helps nurture the gift in your pre-schooler.



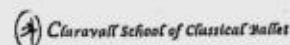
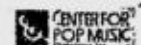
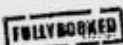
Venue: Fountain Area, Market! Market!
Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig
Date: Sunday, March 27, 2005

Registration Fee: P3,500

Avail of the discounted rate of P2,000 by presenting a proof of purchase of (1) Promil Pre-School 1.6 kg, (2) 900 g or (4) 400 g. Registration is on a first come, first served basis.

Workshops run from April 4 to May 28, 2005. ProGifted Campers will showcase their special talents in a culminating activity at SM Megamall on May 28, 2005.

For inquiries, please call Ms. Krystin A. Bernardez from 9 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday at 892-0116.



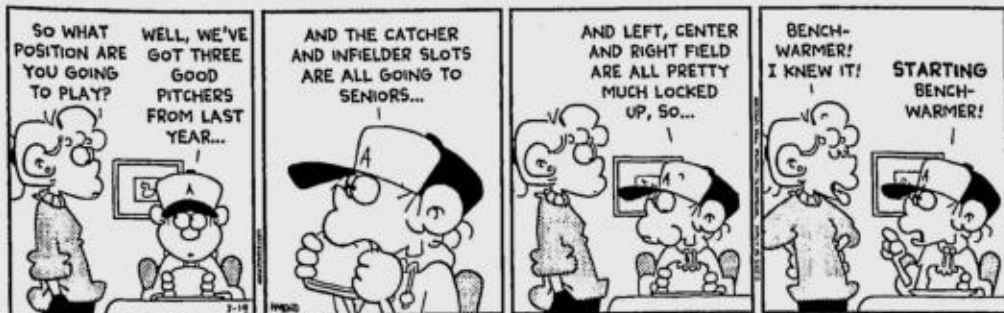
Per DOH WAD Permit # 0329 Series of 2005

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FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

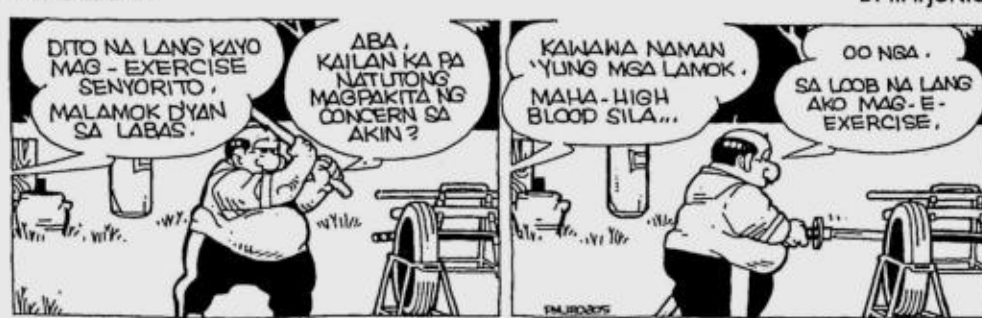


MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY PM. JUNIOR



BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're determined, hard-working and extremely focused. You have a dogged persistence that amazes others. This is because you have a strong need to achieve. Nevertheless, you're also a dreamer and certainly charming! People love your childlike nature. Focus on your closest partnerships this year.

Birthdate of: Bruce Willis, actor; Glenn Close, actress; Wyatt Earp, Western marshal.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Expect to run into ex-partners and ex-spouses from the past. In fact, all kinds of past connections will no doubt surface in the next few weeks. (Buy new clothes: Living well is the best revenge.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good time to finish up research that has been stalled in the water. It's also a good time to wrap up loose details related to government matters. Finish things; don't begin new ones.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're running into old friends. They're popping up out of the woodwork! It's good to have people with whom you have history (for the most part).

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Try not to initiate new business ventures or anything important until April 13. Until then, finish old business and wrap up what is already on your plate.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good time to finish projects related to school, publishing, the media, higher education, the law and medicine. Finish what is already begun. Do not begin new things until after April 12.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Mercury is your ruler. Today it goes retrograde until April 12. You can expect confused communication, lost items and silly errors and delays in everything. Patience!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You'll definitely run into old flames, ex-partners or ex-spouses from your past. That's why it's important to look your best at all times. (Remind them of what they lost.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Prepare yourself for lots of delays, checks that are late in the mail, confused communication and foul-ups in paperwork. Most of this will occur where you work. It will last for several weeks. Good luck.

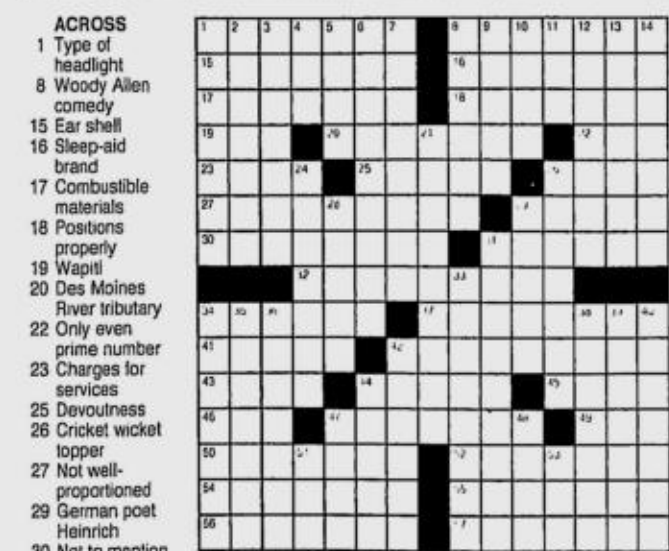
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This month is an excellent time to take care of matters related to children. Discuss shared responsibilities with partners. Resolve loose and fuzzy details.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You'll be involved in old matters and old business connected with family and real estate. This will be a theme for the next month.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Stay on top of car repairs. You can expect delays in transportation (including public transport) during the next few weeks. Fix what needs to be fixed before it breaks down at an inconvenient time.

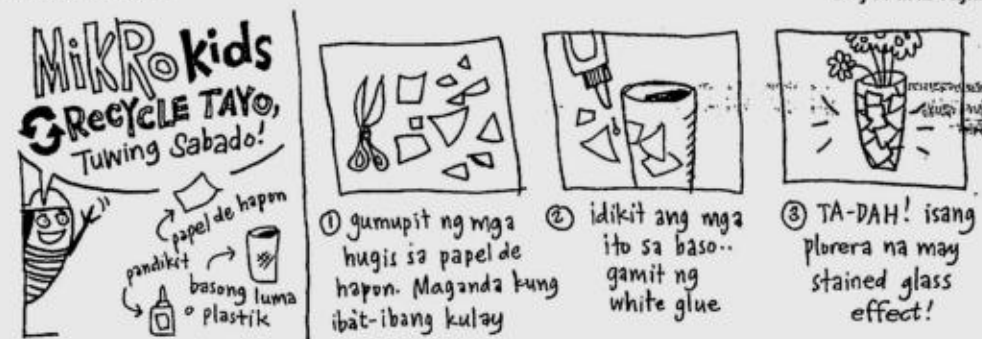
PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): In the next month, your best bet is to finish up old business. Don't begin new things until after April 12. Just deal with what is at hand.

DAILY CROSSWORD



MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



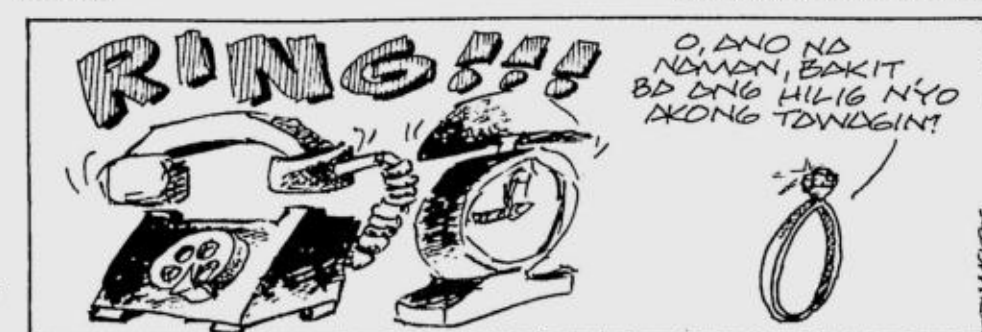
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING





Sneak(er) preview



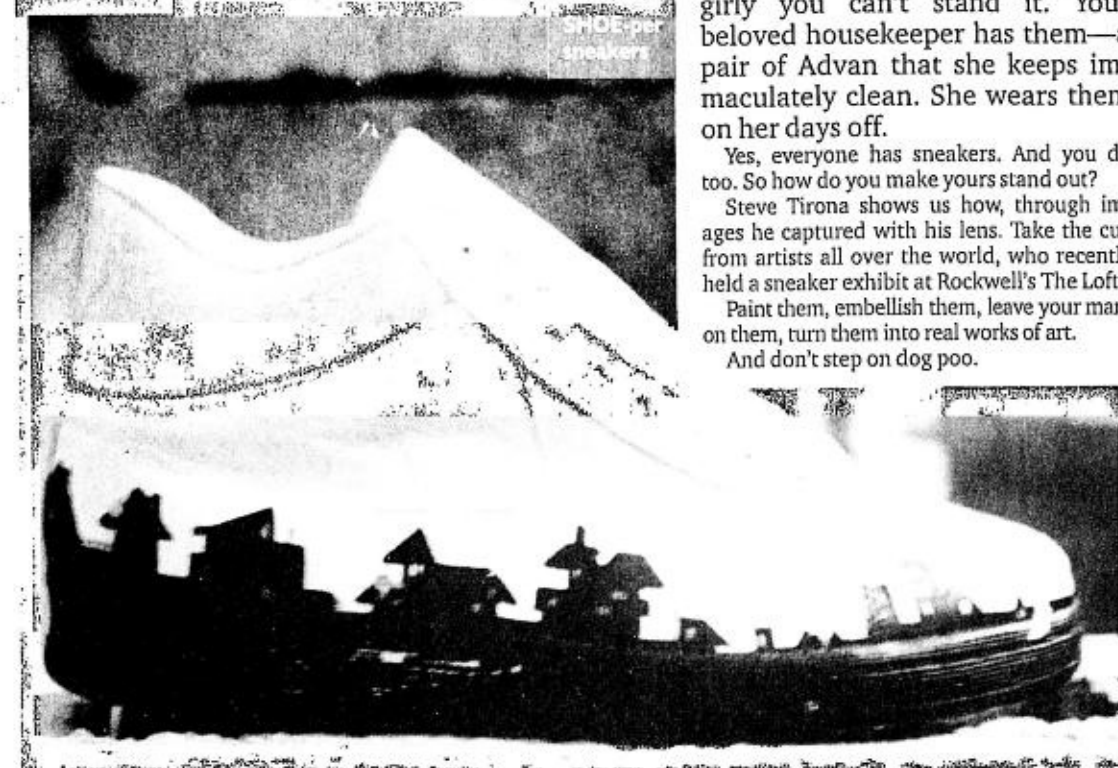
By Pam Pastor
Photos by Steve Tirona

YOUR mom has them—old Tretorns, a relic from the '80s. Your dad has them—new Nikes that he thinks makes him look young. Your brother has them—ratty old Converse Chuck Taylors that he proudly says he's been wearing even before they made the big comeback. Your sister has them—floral Keds. She's so girly you can't stand it. Your beloved housekeeper has them—a pair of Advan that she keeps immaculately clean. She wears them on her days off.

Yes, everyone has sneakers. And you do too. So how do you make yours stand out?

Steve Tirona shows us how, through images he captured with his lens. Take the cue from artists all over the world, who recently held a sneaker exhibit at Rockwell's The Loft.

Paint them, embellish them, leave your mark on them, turn them into real works of art. And don't step on dog poo.



You are man enough to dance !

You've heard of the Black and Blue Party in Montreal. You've heard of the White Party in Palm Springs. You've heard of countless revelers moving and grooving to fabulous beats. For so long you've been jealous of the extravagance and excitement our global neighbors enjoy. Well, darling, be envious no longer, for finally, Manila will have her very first international circuit party: **CircuitAsia 2005!**

This gathering will have every one of all inclinations, color and sizes! For the very first time, partyphiles from all over the world shall come to us to have a party of a lifetime! New Yorkers, Californians, Londoners, Australians, Singaporeans and many more shall arrive here to experience Manila's grandest coming-out party yet!

For each crazy evening of April 29, 30 and May 1, 2005, CircuitAsia will stage theme nights that will showcase extravagant set and stage designs as well as world-class productions. Top-notch US DJ's in the circuit party scene will be flown over here to unleash relentless music and satisfy every party animal's flight of fancy! On April 29 at the NBC Tent, Fort Bonifacio, **DJ Kimberly S** will kick off this momentous occasion in "**Fiesta**," the cacophonous celebration of our very own festive spirit! Next up shall be **DJ Brett Henrichsen** for the "**Pearl of the Pacific**" party on April 30 [venue: TBA]. Infusing indigenous fauna, flora and folklore with his full-bodied beats and beloved anthems, DJ Brett will incite your souls to carnal rebellion! To close the event on May 1 at the World Trade Center Manila is none other **DJ Gomi** in "**Mount Pinatubo: Mud and Fire!**" His immense rhythms shall have your blood rushing throughout your body like seething magma. And, as if they weren't enough, **Kevin Aviance**—the Queen of Live Circuit Entertainment—shall exhibit his raw energy and magnetic glamour in all three evenings for a power performance you won't soon forget!

This is CircuitAsia 2005!—the first ever party of its kind and scale in Manila! Our loud and proud revelry will add another brilliant stroke of color to the global rainbow coalition, affirming the genius of having a diverse yet united global community. *Live. Give. Celebrate.* This is the motto of CircuitAsia 2005. Be one with the party if you believe.

Log on to www.circuitasia.com or call 8493961 for inquiries.

CircuitAsia 2005 is a benefit event for the Gift Foundation in support of the Foundation's program on AIDS Awareness and Advocacy.

Circuitasia
www.circuitasia.com

gift
foundation
www.giftfoundation.info

Superfriends

Want to be on Superfriends? E-mail your pictures to david.milan@lycos.com

Text and photos by David Milan



Zon Beltran

The craziest thing I've done is: When me and my sister had to go home really early one Saturday night, we locked ourselves at home, turned on the disco ball, took our clothes off and danced the night away imagining we're still partying out. People tell me that I am a snob, but it's a wrong impression anyway. And oh, they say that I have good style too! I go beyond the limits when: I think I'm hotter than hot to do something! E-mail: Zonbeltran@yahoo.com



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SUPERFRIENDS/H3

Join na kayo
sa bagong...

SMART
Buddy GSM
Pre-paid

Choose
your
dream

Sa **LAGOT KA...**
isusumbong kita!

Over **P10 million**
in cash to be won in this super exciting game show!
Send DREAM to 232

Dream mo bang yumaman? Sumikat?

SMART CHOOSEYOUR DREAM is a raffle and game promotion exclusive to all SMART GSM subscribers: SMART Buddy, SMART Gold, SMART Infinity, SMART Kid, Talk N Text, Addict Mobile and Addict Mobile Prepaid. Every P15 worth or accumulated P15 worth of download services earns the subscriber one (1) raffle entry. Info text subscription is equivalent to one (1) raffle entry only.

To join the promotion, the subscriber should register to CHOOSEYOUR DREAM. To register, simply key-in REG <name>/<address> and send to 232. Registration is free. Example: REG Gigi Ocampo/63 Rose Street, Makati City. And send to 232.

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During the game proper, the remaining 20 TV contestants will then pass thru another elimination round wherein only one player shall be selected. The successful player will then be given several categories to choose from. Each category automatically wins for the player up to P50,000, depending on the subject chosen.

After the subject is chosen, the player shall randomly select three questions out of seven. Correctly answered questions are equivalent to a corresponding amount wherein the player can win up to P250,000 maximum.

If all three questions are answered correctly, the player wins the jackpot prize of P250,000.

If two questions are answered correctly, the player wins P150,000.

*Then P100,000 will be carried on to the succeeding week's pot.

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on GMA 7 every Monday at 10pm.
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